SPECIAL YEAR-END BLOWOUT ISSUE!

FEATURING

JOHN PETRUCCI ▪ NITA STRAUSS ▪ JOE BONAMASSA ▪ "KINGFISH" INGRAM ▪ STEVE STEVENS

GUITAR WORLD

GUITAR & BASS TRANSCRIPTIONS

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
BLACK SUMMER

FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH
(W/KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD & BRIAN MAY)
BLUE ON BLACK

SUBLIME
BADFISH

"I'm not a 'guitarist of the year' — I'm just a dude!"

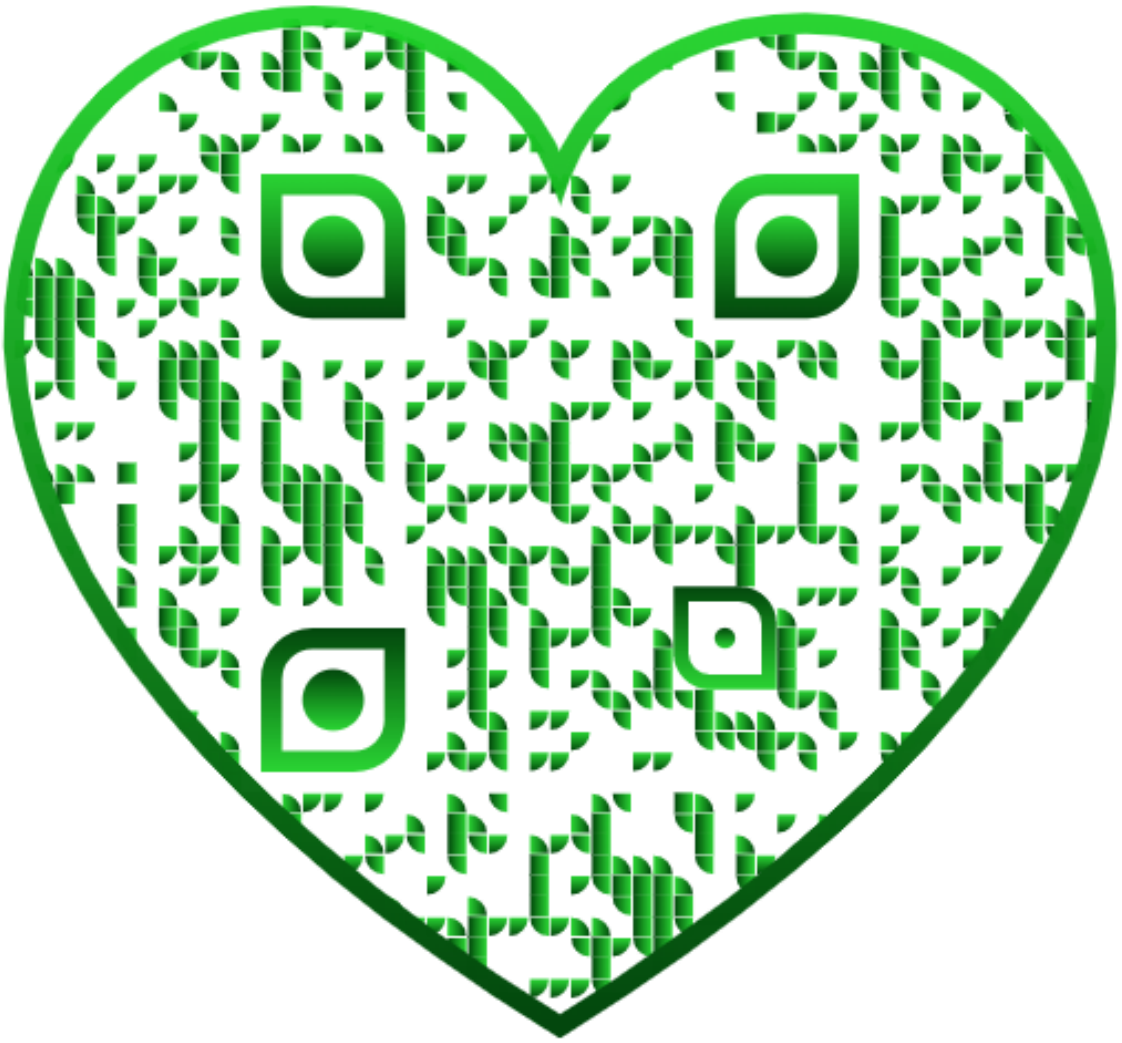
WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

SHREDDING FOR TAYLOR HAWKINS, HIS NEXT ALBUM AND THE FUTURE OF EVH GEAR!

THE BEST OF 2022

THE GUITARISTS, THE GEAR, THE RIFFS & MORE!

FUTURE



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– Paul Reed Smith

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INTRODUCING THE NEW 1951 TELECASTER® IN BUTTERSCOTCH BLONDE

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Built to original specs, the American Vintage II 1951 Telecaster features a thick "U"-shaped maple neck – a hallmark of 50s Telecaster guitars prized for its substantial feel and excellent tonal qualities. The beautiful ash body is bright and resonant while Pure Vintage '51 Telecaster pickups give it that iconic Tele twang.

BUILT TO ORIGINAL SPECS. ALL OF THEM.

- Ash Body
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- Black Dot Inlays
- Bone Nut
- Pure Vintage Single Line Tuning Machines
- Pure Vintage Three Brass Barrel Saddle Bridge
- One-Ply Black Phenolic Pickguard
- Pure Vintage '51 Single-Coil Tele Pickups
- Three-Position Blade switch

INTRODUCING THE NEW 1954 PRECISION BASS® IN VINTAGE BLONDE

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- Ash Body
- Gloss Nitrocellulose Lacquer Finish
- One-Piece Maple 1954 "C"-Shaped Neck
- Maple Fingerboard
- Vintage Tall Frets
- Black Dot Inlays
- Bone Nut
- Pure Vintage Reverse Open-Gear Tuning Machines
- Pure Vintage Two Fiber Saddle Bridge
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- Pure Vintage '54 Single-Coil Precision Pickup
- Master Volume, Tone Controls

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INTRODUCING THE NEW 1957 STRATOCASTER® IN SEAFOAM GREEN

With its streamlined curves, sparkling sound and innovative tremolo bridge, the Strat® was a phenomenon from the start.

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BUILT TO ORIGINAL SPECS. ALL OF THEM.

- Alder Body
- Gloss Nitrocellulose Lacquer Finish
- One-Piece Maple 1957 "V"-Shaped Neck
- Maple Fingerboard
- Vintage Tall Frets
- Black Dot Inlays
- Bone Nut
- Pure Vintage Single Line Tuning Machines
- Pure Vintage Synchronized Tremolo
- One-Ply Parchment Pickguard
- Pure Vintage '57 Stratocaster Pickups
- Five-Position Blade Switch

Fender® AMERIC

INTRODUCING THE NEW 1966 JAZZMASTER® IN DAKOTA RED

A stylistic shape-shifter, the massively versatile Jazzmaster was initially created for jazz clubs and later championed by the punk world.

Built to original specs, the American Vintage II 1966 Jazzmaster boasts the same warm tone and floating tremolo that made the original an icon. An upscale rosewood fingerboard with block inlays and binding sits atop a comfortable "C"-shaped maple neck with matching painted headstock. Pure Vintage '66 Jazzmaster pickups provide warm and articulate Fender tone.

BUILT TO ORIGINAL SPECS. ALL OF THEM.

- Alder Body
- Gloss Nitrocellulose Lacquer Finish
- Maple 1966 "C"-Shaped Neck
- Bound Round-Laminated Rosewood Fingerboard
- Vintage Tall Frets
- Pearloid Block Inlays
- Bone Nut
- Pure Vintage Single Line Tuning Machines
- Pure Vintage Threaded Steel Barrel Saddle Bridge
- Three-Ply Parchment Pickguard
- Pure Vintage '66 Single-Coil Jazzmaster Pickups
- Three-Position Toggle Switch

INTRODUCING THE NEW 1966 JAZZ BASS® IN 3-COLOR SUNBURST

Introduced in the 60s, the growl and punch of the Jazz Bass revolutionized pop, rock and funk.

Built to original specs, the American Vintage II 1966 Jazz Bass features a "U"-shaped maple neck with bound rosewood fingerboard for smooth, high-speed playing. Elegant touches like white pearloid dot position inlays and lollipop tuners add a distinctive touch, while the Pure Vintage '66 Jazz Bass pickups deliver authentic Fender tone.

BUILT TO ORIGINAL SPECS. ALL OF THEM.

- Alder Body
- Gloss Nitrocellulose Lacquer Finish
- Maple 1966 "C"-Shaped Neck
- Bound Round-Laminated Rosewood Fingerboard
- Vintage Tall Frets
- White Pearloid Dot Inlays
- Bone Nut
- Pure Vintage Lollipop Tuning Machines
- Pure Vintage Threaded Steel Saddle Bridge
- Four-Ply Tortoiseshell Pickguard
- Pure Vintage '66 Single-Coil Jazz Bass Pickups
- Volume 1, Volume 2, Mater Tone Control

AN VINTAGE II

INTRODUCING THE NEW 1972 TELECASTER® THINLINE IN NATURAL

Over 20 years after the debut of the Telecaster, Fender® introduced this high-output powerhouse.

Built to original specs, the American Vintage II 1972 Telecaster Thinline features a one-piece "C"-shaped maple neck for exceptional comfort and a semi-hollow ash body for a touch of acoustic warmth. Authentic CuNiFe™ Wide Range pickups deliver all the power and chime of the original.

BUILT TO ORIGINAL SPECS. ALL OF THEM.

- Semi-Hollow Ash Body
- Gloss Polyurethane Finish
- One-Piece Maple 1972 "C"-Shaped Neck
- Maple Fingerboard
- Vintage Tall Frets
- Black Dot Inlays
- Bone Nut
- Pure Vintage Fender "F" Stamped Tuning Machines
- Pure Vintage Bent-Steel Saddle Hardtail Bridge
- Four-Ply Aged White Pearl Pickguard
- Authentic CuNiFe Wide-Range Humbucking Pickups
- Three-Position Blade Switch

Fender

American Vintage II

BUILT TO ORIGINAL SPECS. ALL OF THEM.

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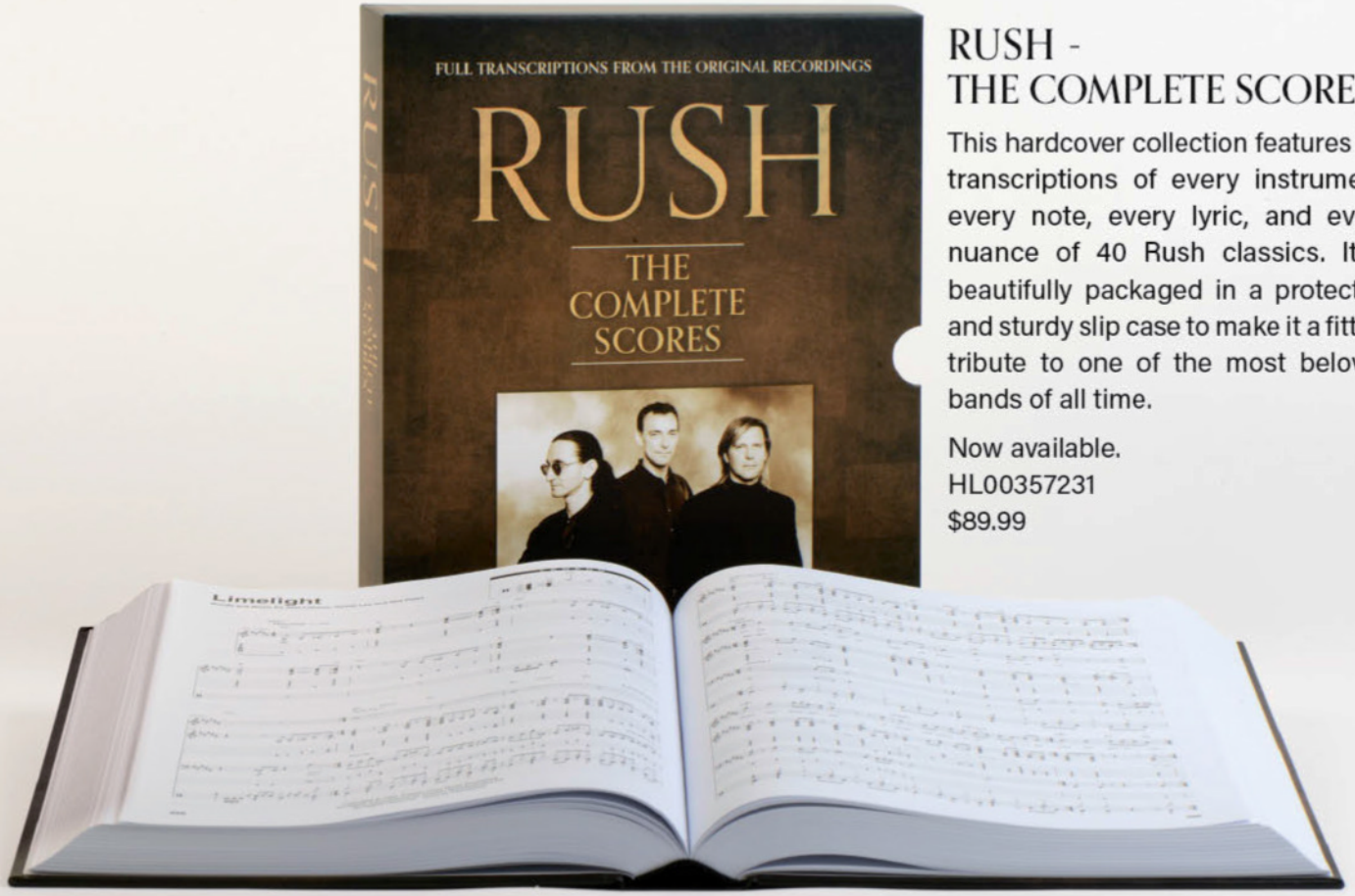

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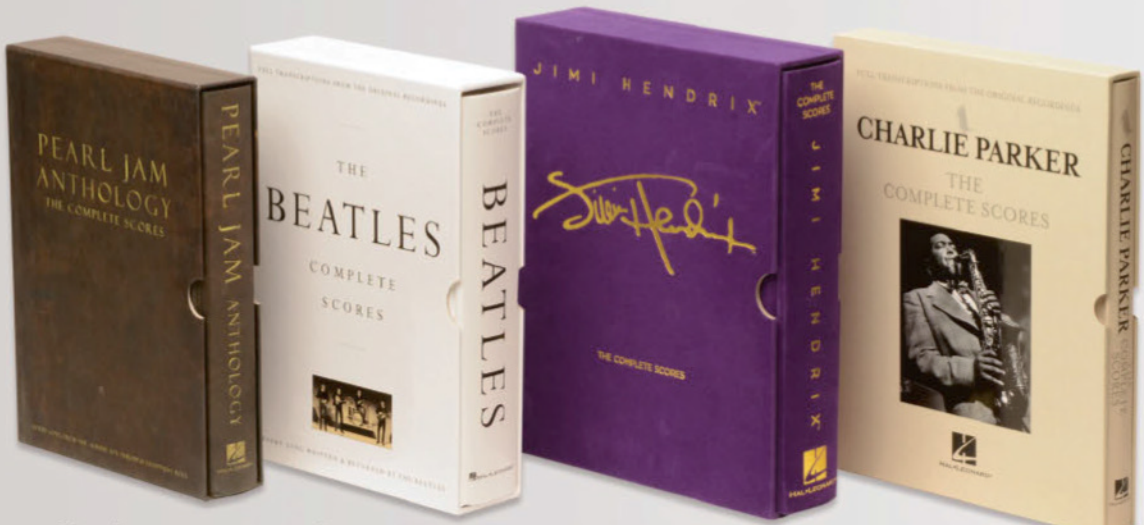

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THE BEST OF 2022

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Wolfgang Van Halen with a new EVH SA126. "It's another door opening," he says

ANDRAIA ALLSOP

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by Five Finger Death Punch (featuring Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Brantley Gilbert and Brian May)

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Thanks to the **Boss SD-1's** long history and incredible success, there's a very good chance that most guitarists reading these words already own or have owned one

COVER PHOTOS: ANDRAIA ALLSOP (WOLFGANG VAN HALEN)
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WOODSHED

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TWO FOR '22

I GOTTA SAY, 2022 was my favorite "guitar year" since 2016. That was the year of GNR's initial Not in This Lifetime... tour (with Slash and Duff back in the fold), AC/DC's Axl Rose-fronted tour — and that whole Generation Axe thing with Steve Vai, Zakk, Yngwie, Tosin and Nuno (It's cool that those last four guys don't even need surnames — like Cher).

What was so special about 2022, you ask? Well, at the risk of repeating info that's hiding elsewhere in this issue, you had the announcement about Pantera and Zakk (I'm definitely looking forward to talking more about that in 2023), the Rage Against the Machine tour, Nita making the move from Alice Cooper's band to Demi Lovato's band, John Frusciante reuniting with Flea and the gang and Wolfgang Van Halen blowing minds at the Taylor Hawkins tribute shows, not to mention some truly good new music by Joe Satriani, Polyphia, Megadeth, Steve Vai, Animals As Leaders, GA-20, Slipknot, Eric Gales and so many more. It was the sort of year that couldn't be summed up with just one *GW* cover, so we've gone and made two — Wolfgang and Nita (two more people who don't need last names).

— Damian Fanelli

The Pick

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Ian is no match for this subscriber!

I live in Cape Coral, Florida, and subscribe to *GW*. Hurricane Ian went directly over our house, causing major damage, although we feel blessed and grateful to be alive and are luckier than a lot of people. The following morning, I found my mailbox six houses down the street. The only thing in it was my latest issue of *GW*. It was a little beat up, but it was there. You have to laugh at some things during this! I will continue to subscribe and we will rebuild stronger. P.S. All my guitars and amps are safe!

— Marshall Stakks

Johnny Thunders — the stories I could tell…

I moved into the East Village in NYC in the mid Eighties; and like a dope (no pun intended) I'm, incredibly, still here. Junkie rock was still in full swing back then, and Johnny Thunders [*December 2022*] was its reigning monarch.

I owned a clothing store on storied St. Mark's Place — ground zero for the cultural madness that Manhattan exemplified. While no one but bodegas (remember those?) opened until noon (the kids who worked the clothing, record and chachka shops in the neighborhood couldn't make it in any earlier than that after a night of debauchery), I opened my store at 11 a.m. because, hey, you never know who could walk through the door.

And one hot, sticky August morning at 11:15, that's how I first met Johnny. The only guy on the street, fresh from copping dope in Alphabet City, came stumbling and staggering straight for my store, tripped down the four stone steps and crashed face first into my picture window. Holding himself up by his face, he dragged himself clear across the glass, leaving a smear of snot the length of the window, until finally running into the door jam. He made eye contact with me, said "Fuck you," stumbled back up the far end of the stairs and continued on his way.

While it was no fun cleaning off the glue-like smear left on my window, I couldn't help but chuckle; I was just introduced to my childhood guitar hero. As I got to know Johnny over the next few years, my mind would often return to this morning and I couldn't help but think, how frickin' appropriate.

You see, Johnny offended a lot of people, and I mean *a lot*. He truly didn't give a rat's ass. Eventually, though, like all the people you care about in your life, for better or worse you learn to excuse the bad moments and cherish the great ones. With Johnny that was particularly easy; all you had to do was listen to him play guitar. Thank you for the article.

— AndrewSteven Damsits, NYC

Farewell, *Bass Player* magazine

Earlier this week, I found out that *Bass Player* magazine was going to end its physical print. I'm a 75/25 bass guy, but I've always found *Guitar World* to be the superior magazine. Please tell me the physical issues will keep coming!

— Cody Martin, Wichita, KS

[*They'll keep on coming! — DF*]

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

Daren Pippert

AGE: 55
HOMETOWN: Lawrence, KS
GUITARS: Epiphone Ace Frehley Signature Les Paul, 1987 Kramer Focus 3000, 1996 Optek Fretlight Pro, Flying V, Epiphone Explorer, Epiphone Les Paul Junior, Peavey T-60, 2000 Ibanez AE-18 acoustic-electric, Alvarez acoustic 12-string
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: My originals from various projects, Elvis Presley "Jailhouse Rock," Otis Redding "Dock of the Bay," Aerosmith "Dream On," Kiss "Lick It Up," Jeff Beck "People Get Ready," Metallica "Enter Sandman"
GEAR I WANT MOST: American flag-adorned Strat and a looper pedal

Zakk Collier

AGE: 13
HOMETOWN: McRae, AR
GUITARS: Left-handed Dean bass, Jackson Rhoads, Jackson King V
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Megadeth "Holy Wars… the Punishment Due," Dethklok "Black Fire Upon Us," Rings of Saturn "Faces Imploding" and "Mental Prolapse," GG Allin & the Murder Junkies "Bite It You Scum" and "Die When You Die"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Marshall JCM 800 Lead Series half-stack, left-handed B.C. Rich Bich, and left-handed Thunderbird bass

Tom Bryant & Co.

FROM LEFT: Tom, Lee and Vaughan Bryant
AGES: 56, 21 and 19
HOMETOWN: Northampton, PA
GUITARS: Gibson ES-335, Fender Stratocaster, Epiphone Les Paul
SONGS WE'VE BEEN PLAYING: Blackberry Smoke "One Horse Town," Cream "Badge," John Mayer "Belief"
GEAR WE WANT MOST: Gibson J-45, National resonator, PRS Silver Sky

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READER ART

OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of *Guitar World*, email **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com** with a JPG or PDF of the image!

KURT COBAIN BY PATRICK S.

To send us a letter via snail mail, write to Guitar World Sounding Board, Future, 347 W. 36th St., 17th Floor/Penthouse New York, NY 10018

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM BY BUDDY EARNEST

Pierre Carrier

AGE: 68
LOCATION: Montreal, QC, Canada
GUITARS: Fender American Standard Strat, Gibson ES-335, Takamine DSF15C
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Jimi Hendrix "All Along the Watchtower," ZZ Top "La Grange," Led Zeppelin "Ramble On," Jimmy Herring (w/John McLaughlin) "Hope," Sloan "The Other Man"
GEAR I WANT MOST: PRS J. McLaughlin 2017 Double Neck, Suhr Classic S (SSS)

Claude Hitt

AGE: 59
GUITARS: '71 Fender Strat, '93 Gold Fender Strat, '95 Goldtop Gibson Les Paul, '78 Gibson SG, '82 Guild acoustic, '12 Carvin thin acoustic, two custom Carvin electrics
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Original songs plus the Allman Brothers Band "Southbound" and "Melissa," T. Rex "Bang a Gong," Charlie Daniels Band "Long Haired Country Boy," Delbert McClinton "Two More Bottles of Wine"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Rickenbacker guitar and double-stack 100-watt Marshall

Davy Rich

HOMETOWN: Saint Paul, MN
GUITARS: Handmade Custom Telecaster, Fender Limited Edition AM Strat, Gibson Les Paul Traditional, Taylor acoustic
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Third Eye Blind "Semi-Charmed Life," Echo & the Bunnymen "Lips Like Sugar," Nine Days "Absolutely," Tal Bachman "She's So High"
GEAR I WANT MOST: PRS Guitars Fiore, Fender Eric Johnson

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Molly Miller with her 1978 Gibson ES-335

It's Miller Time

THE HYBRID-PICKING MOLLY MILLER AIMS TO "BRING BACK THE INSTRUMENTAL"

By Jim Beaugez

PLENTY OF CONVENTIONAL instrumental guitar music is geared toward expressing a sort of athleticism with the instrument. California native Molly Miller has the chops for all that and more, but she takes a straighter path to musical enlightenment — one steeped in creative phrasing and genre-blending, like the music she plays in the Molly Miller Trio.

"Instrumental tunes that stand on their own as songs but also have the element of improvisation and arranging ring true to me," Miller says. "[*We*] think of things like Booker T., early R&B tunes, surf tunes — the tagline we say sometimes is, 'bringing back the instrumental.'"

On the Molly Miller Trio's recent long player St. George, the bandleader performs gently emotive, jazz-adjacent music with bassist Jennifer Condos, who previously backed Stevie Nicks and Ray LaMontagne, and drummer Jay Bellerose, who also performs with Robert Plant and Alison Krauss. But the music Miller composes has less in common with be-bop than the funk, soul and folk she also cites as influences.

"I very much think of myself as a guitar player," she says. "I don't think of myself as a jazz guitarist, per se; more just like a guitarist-musician. I have an eclectic taste in music and I think all of that led me to wanting to create music that resonated with people as songs."

Miller has built her life around her love of the guitar, recording and touring with artists such as Jason Mraz and the Black Eyed Peas while chairing the guitar department at Los Angeles College of Music since 2016. Her life has revolved around the instrument for far longer, though.

From ages 7 to 14, she played top 40 music and classics by the Beatles and

PHOTO BY JEN ROSENSTEIN

the Beach Boys in a cover band with her siblings, while moonlighting with friends on blink-182 songs and also playing in a jazz band. Despite spending so much time centered around music, though, she wasn't very serious about her talent at first.

"Before high school, I was notoriously the worst disciplined of the family band," she admits. "I was always trying to get out of band practice and hang out with my friends, extend our bathroom breaks, [*making*] every excuse. I never practiced. And then I got into high school and I was like, 'Well, I actually love this.'"

Miller, who furthered her music studies at Berklee College of Music camps and earned a doctorate in musical arts from the University of Southern California, has a tendency to play behind the beat in a subtle way, hanging her notes right on the edge of the beat.

"I feel like singers do it a lot, where they lay behind the beat and play with time in a cool way," she says. "I try to play not, like, just a guitar player all the time, but also how someone would sing it. I think what I'm doing is kind of like Billie Holiday, where she can lay so behind the beat or just play with where time is."

Having Condos and Bellerose to keep time behind her gives Miller the liberty to explore around the pocket so freely. "Their sense of time is crazy and they're such deep players, [*and*] it's fun to play with that," she says. "Some of my favorite vocalists can lay so far behind the beat, but they always know where it is, and as a listener, you know where it is, too. It's not like, 'What's going on,' you know? I think that's what's happening [*with us*], too, on a guitar."

During her considerable music studies, Miller studied fingerstylists Maybelle Carter of the Carter Family and Elizabeth Cotten, the left-handed folk-blues pioneer remembered for her unique technique of playing the bass lines with her fingers and the melody with her thumb, on a guitar strung for a right-handed player.

"I'm an avid hybrid picker, so I always have the pick in my first finger and thumb," she says. "I always use a Fender heavy celluloid confetti pick, and then with my middle finger and ring finger, I'll be using fingerstyle. I love hybrid picking, 'cause it's the flexibility of everything."

Miller runs a simple setup that keeps her signal and her tones clean, leaning on the 1978 Gibson ES-335 she's had since she was 17 and a relic Telecaster as her main guitars in the Trio. A Benson Nathan Junior Combo recently replaced her modded Princeton as her amplifier of choice, and she adds a Line 6 Helix effects unit for her Mraz gig.

For the Trio's next album, due in 2023, she went deeper into her tone explorations, running two separate rigs to get a clean tone and a funkier tone, which she plans to blend in the mixing process.

"*St. George* was one guitar, one guitar amp and one pedalboard," she says. "I played it pretty safe with sounds, 'cause I get kind of scared to go off too far out there, but I wanted to be a little bolder on this [*next*] one. I had been listening to Mickey Baker and wanted to not be so afraid to use more delays, use more modulation."

FROM LEFT: TLC PHOTOGRAPHY CAITY MARINO JOSHUA PICKERING ABOVE: JEN ROSENSTEIN

INTRODUCING

Ne'er-do-well

Fun Days (Ne'er-do-well Records)

SOUND This Austin-based one-man-band (Bryan Rolli), operating under the Ne'er-do-well banner, delivers a mix of blistering, high-energy, metal-fired rock 'n' roll that'll delight anyone missing the glory days of the late Eighties. With more than a hint of Buckcherry and GNR, Rolli's guitar and voice slash and burn with visceral intent.

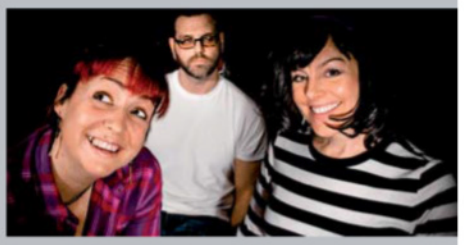
KEY TRACK "Feel No Pain"

Brad Marino

Basement Beat (Hey Pizza Records)

SOUND The New Hampshire-spawned Marino's music is steeped in the essence of classic Ramones — self-described as "Ramonescore." The album plays out like a long-lost classic from the band's early years. Guitars grind like Johnny, and Marino has nailed the pop sensibilities of *da brudders* at their best. Downstroke heaven for lovers of the inventors of punk.

KEY TRACK "That Girl"



Stars Like Ours

High (Rum Bar Records)

SOUND Boston three-piece cook up their unique sonic stew using classic early punk, garage and alt-rock as the primary ingredients. The song is king here, served mightily by Kristen Holiday's super tight, chugging rhythm riffs and stinging, incisive, memorable solos. Michelle Paulhus' bass lines eschew the obvious to maximize melodic opportunities.

KEY TRACK "High" — *Mark McStea*

Wheel's Jussi Turunen [*left*] and James Lascelles perform in Finland, July 2, 2022

Wheel

WITH THEIR BLAZING NEW EP, THESE FINNISH/ENGLISH PROG-METALLERS ROLL INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORY

By Alison Richter

WHEN FINNISH/ENGLISH prog-metal rockers Wheel got together in 2015, celebrity wasn't on their radar. "The goal was never about making us as famous as possible," says vocalist/guitarist/songwriter James Lascelles. "It was just an artistic outlet, and at least so far, I'm amazed we've gotten this far with that mindset, because it seems it's not that normal."

Lascelles, bassist Aki Virta, drummer Santeri Saksala and lead guitarist Jussi Turunen, who joined in 2020, recently signed a deal with InsideOut Music in advance of their new EP, *Rumination*. Their fifth release, it follows EPs *The Path* (2017) and *The Divide* (2018) and full-length albums *Moving Backwards* (2019) and *Resident Human* (2021).

Wheel's definition of prog is that there is no definition, making it the ideal genre for tracks like "Blood Drinker," the first single from *Rumination*. "I think it's an accurate term for what we're doing," Lascelles says. "It can be a bit nebulous in some respects. Prog metal, particularly, has stylistic traits that many bands use or emulate. And then there are bands that pioneer new things — like Meshuggah, for example, who have come up with their own rhythmic identity. Prog, to me, always meant freedom to try things that wouldn't work in a more traditional contemporary setting. So it still feels very prog to us."

"As guitarists, of course we have some stuff in unison, but mostly we have two-part harmonies and two-part rhythms, but not in the traditional way [*as*] used in bands like Iron Maiden," Turunen says. "We're playing against each other rhythmically, and that has become our sound."

Wheel will spend the remainder of this year and the beginning of 2023 on tour. Upon completing the itinerary, they'll return to Finland to begin work on their third full-length album. While only in the planning stages, the band promises that fans can expect the unexpected, as they continue experimenting and pushing boundaries.

"I don't want to make the same album over and over again," Lascelles says. "There are so many things we want to try, and I don't want to set limits on what that might be. The priority has always been the song, the right parts and the right sounds. In the future, that might be acoustic guitar, 12-string, synthesizer or piano. We don't know yet, and that's the fun bit."

"Prog is a natural environment to experiment with different instruments and ideas," Turunen adds. "I love playing acoustic guitar. I also play mandolin and a bit of steel guitar. That may not be where we're going, but you never know. We're not counting anything out."

"The goal was never about making us as famous as possible... at least so far, I'm amazed we've gotten this far with that mindset, because it seems it's not that normal."

— JAMES LASCELLES

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INQUIRER
PETER BUCK

THE FORMER R.E.M. GUITARIST TALKS GEAR, EMBARRASSING ON-STAGE MOMENTS AND GUITAR SOLOS IN GENERAL...

Interview by Joe Matera

Peter Buck performs with R.E.M. in Ames, Iowa, March 10, 1989

Q: Who or what inspired you to pick up the guitar?

Everyone from my generation says the same thing — the Beatles. I was around six when I saw them on TV for the first time. At that moment, I realized that was what I wanted to do with my life.

Q: What was your first guitar?

I was about 13 or 14 when I got it. It was a $17 Kay that was fire engine red, and it came with an amp. It wasn't a great guitar. My first real guitar was a late-Sixties Epiphone, which I got a year later. The neck was straight, the sound was decent and it was the first time when I played guitar and I could tell what it sounded like — as in, I'd play chords and it sounded like the chords I heard on a record!

Q: What was the first song you learned to play?

All those three-chord songs; I was pretty good at figuring those out. But the Chicago song "25 or 6 to 4" — which is basically the [*the Ventures*'] "Walk, Don't Run" chords — I remember playing that and going, "Oh man, I'm playing that song!" That was the first non-three-chord song I ever learned. When I wanted to be a songwriter, I got myself a Beatles songbook, went through it and figured out the chords and voicings — how to use 7ths, how to change keys. That was a huge step up for me.

Q: Do you remember your first gig?

It was horrible. The only thing I can remember about it is playing the *Batman* theme, and I'm not even sure we played the third chord. I think we just played the A and the D.

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?

They're all embarrassing! You have to work so hard to get up there, and you really have to gear yourself up. Then, if something takes you out of it, it's usually equipment failures. We [*R.E.M.*] toured for four years without a guitar tech; I didn't even have extra guitars, so if I broke a string, I had to sit there and change it in front of however many people were there. We didn't have tuners, either, so you're humming away to try and figure out what the note is. I also didn't have clippers — so it was just a pain. My amps were breaking up all the time and I couldn't fix an amp to save my life.

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?

The Jetglo Rickenbacker 360 I bought in 1981; it's the guitar I've used on every record I've ever made. I have a bunch of other guitars that I use in the studio and live, but [*the Rick*] is my favorite, and it's the guitar I've used my entire adult life.

Q: You tend to "play for the song" — with a rhythmic ability that sounds like two guitarists — instead of being a conventional lead guitarist. Have you ever had the desire to play solos?

As a songwriter, my job is to lay out the chord changes. I want to come up with a great riff and tie it in with the song. I usually write bridges as I'm not much of a soloist. I'd rather write a bridge or a piece that is a guitar line. When R.E.M. started with Mike [*Mills*] on bass, even though he's the best bass player on earth, you can't really count on him to hit the root note on the one. It's just not going to happen. So I had to find a way to fill some of the low end — and then the melodies on the high end — and I kind of learned how to [*flatpick and fingerpick*], so I could get a lot of sounds just by playing chords and walk-ups, just trying to fill the space.

"Though I may not be that great a guitar player, the things I can do, I can do really well"

Q: What advice would you offer young guitarists?

Write songs, because that's the best way to get better. Listen to great music and try to write songs that are of that quality because you're coming into melodies and chord changes and rhythmic ideas. Otherwise, just practice. I used to spend years playing four hours a night and though I may not be that great a guitar player, the things I can do, I can do really well.

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MAKIN' TRACKS
ORIANTHI

THE FORMER ALICE COOPER AND MICHAEL JACKSON GUITARIST WALKS US THROUGH FIVE OF HER CLASSIC TRACKS — AND FIVE FROM HER BRAND-NEW ALBUM, *ROCK CANDY*

Interview by Mark McStea

RICHIE SAMBORA

"Light It Up"

From *Rock Candy* (2022)

Rock Candy was made with my good friend Jacob Bunton. We're both real rockers at heart — we love anything riff-based and heavy. I wanted something where the riffs sounded like a bass and guitar playing at once. We jammed on the riff and came up with the stomping line that opens this song. We work really quickly; we did the whole album — at the rate of a song a day — in 12 days. "Light It Up" is about living your own life and stepping into your own power and feeling comfortable with that, as a lot of people don't do that. People will run away from taking control, but that's where the real power is. Negativity can be real loud, but when you step into your own power, that's when you see things differently, you know?

"How Do You Sleep"

From *Heaven in This Hell* (2013)

This seems to be one of the favorite songs for my fans. I always get a lot of requests for it. I wrote it with Dave Stewart, and I actually wrote it on the piano. I was going through a break-up and it was a song that just came out of me organically. Every time I play it, it takes me right back to where I was. I played a classical guitar for the acoustic solo, which was Dave's idea. He wanted to take it somewhere unexpected from where that sort of song would usually go. It really opened up the song at the end and made it very different. It added a real spark to it. I love jamming out with this song when we play it live — it's a lot of fun.

"Where Did Your Heart Go"

From *Rock Candy*

I'm a blues-based player — that's how I started with my dad's record collection — but I also love a really good pop song. If I can fuse those things together in a song, that's something I really enjoy pulling off. This track started as a diary entry; that's where my lyrics came from. When you're going with a feeling on a track, as I was here, you can just kind of add whatever is on your mind as you're laying it down and really get carried away with the spirit of what you're doing. With the guitar sound, I wanted to go for something spacey but very melodic, so I've got a really nice delay on the solo and fills that really seems to add to the emotion of what I'm playing.

"Contagious"

From *O* (2020)

There is a lot going on in this song for sure. [*Laughs*] I wanted it to be massive and heavy, and I was listening to a lot of Muse, AC/DC and Nine Inch Nails at the time, funnily enough, which may have influenced the track a little. I just had all this different music on my playlist when I was

"Ever since I was a kid, I've had this feeling that the blues won't leave me alone. I guess I listened to way too many Robert Johnson records!"

Orianthi with her ubiquitous PRS Guitars Hollowbody II Piezo

hiking, and I was coming up with ideas that seemed to reflect what I was listening to. There are so many parts to this song, and it really transports you to a different place. I like mixing up big riffs with lighter-sounding parts in a song. There's only so many riffs, though; sometimes you'll come up with something and someone will say it sounds like this or that — but there's only so many combinations that sound right. [*Laughs*]

"Fire Together"

From ***Rock Candy***

This is a really fun song. I just wanted an upbeat, punchy song that wasn't particularly deep lyrically, but that would act to lift the spirits of someone listening to it. It's a lot of fun to play — I came up with that riff a long time ago in Nashville, and then we finished it up in L.A. by the time we were ready to put the album together. I approached the solo as a live solo rather than thinking about preparing it and punching it in. It certainly wasn't overthought or anything. I like to have melodies in my solos, I like them to be memorable so that they can almost be sung. When I'm working out solos, I usually do it when I'm in the car driving, listening to demos and humming something that I'll try to work out how to play on the guitar.

"Illuminate"

From ***Rock Candy***

I split this instrumental into two parts to open and close the album, to bookend everything else on the record. I wanted it to sound like something you'd open a show with; that's how I wrote it when I came up with the idea in my studio in L.A. I put it together with Jacob, and that's him playing violin at the end — he's a great violin player. I think we're going to open our shows with this one going forward. It's quite a composed piece, and I think I am happiest when the solo is structured; when I listen back to something where there's a lot of freeform noodling and playing, it can just annoy me. [*Laughs*] I've certainly done a lot of that, but as I've gotten older and made more records, I've found that I really like to completely structure things.

"Heaven in This Hell"

From ***Heaven in This Hell***

There's a lot of wah on this one — I really love using a wah-wah pedal. It started life as a kind of Delta blues riff, but then I put an octave fuzz on it and made it into a heavy blues-rock vibe. We used to open our shows with this one as it is such a strong live track; it always gets a really strong reaction and it's a great song to stretch out on. I don't generally leave the wah on for tone — I usually use it for extra attack, which comes from growing up listening to Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan, where they use it as a kind of beat pedal. [*Laughs*] I love that effect, though. It seems to really help the guitar to speak when you're digging in for some emotional impact.

"Sinners Hymn"

From ***O***

More wah on this one! [*Laughs*] This actually also started life as a Delta blues song, and the lyrics reflect that. It's kind of a dark song and the producer, Marti Frederiksen, said let's make it super heavy on the chorus, so it takes it in a different direction. The song is pretty fiery, and the solo at the end was an idea I added afterwards. Listening back I realized it needed an extra kick to it at the end, which I knew was how I'd do it live, so we went back in to do that last solo. Marti and I really experimented with this whole album; it was such fun to do.

"Life's Like Dying Without You"

From ***Rock Candy***

I actually wrote this in about 10 minutes. I had written the lyrics; I walked into the studio and there was an acoustic guitar there and I just started strumming it. It was just very simple and direct. Jacob and I played acoustic guitar live in the room. It was completed really quickly — then I put down the vocal tracks just about as fast. It was all very organic. This is another track that started life as a diary entry where I started to think about what I'd written in terms of it being a song. The solo is deliberately simple, where I just really focus on the melody. This song is very different from what I've done before. It's always really fun to move out of your comfort zone into other areas.

"Blues Won't Leave Me Alone"

From ***Radio Free America*** (2018)

I recorded this album with Richie [*Sambora*]. It was a lot of fun, but it was a very different kind of sound — almost like a new-age blues. This is one that people love to hear live. I think it resonates for people and it certainly does for me; ever since I was a kid I've had this feeling that the blues won't leave me alone. I guess I listened to way too many Robert Johnson records! [*Laughs*] My father had such an amazing record collection, which was predominantly blues — B.B., Freddie and Albert King, Gary Moore, Eric Clapton, Howlin' Wolf — growing up listening to that, it's always going to be the foundation of my playing.

Orianthi's new album, Rock Candy*, is available now.*

Christone "Kingfish" Ingram with his new signature Fender Telecaster. "Humbuckers are always going to be my sound," he says

Riding with the Kingfish

INSPIRED BY THE TONES OF GARY MOORE AND ALBERT COLLINS, CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM DEBUTS HIS FENDER KINGFISH TELE DELUXE

By Jim Beaugez

CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM knows there are a lot of guitars in the sea, to borrow a phrase, and he's been known to play quite a few of them over the years. But now, the heir to the Delta blues crown finally has hooked one of his own: the Fender Kingfish Telecaster Deluxe.

Modeled after the Troublemaker Tele, from the guitar maker's Parallel Universe series, Ingram cribbed specs like the stop tailpiece and jumbo Seventies Fender headstock in his quest for the perfect Tele — and he's pretty sure he found it. His signature model has been his No. 1 ax since April, when it arrived just in time to tape a performance of "Outside of This Town," the lead track from his 2019 self-titled Alligator debut, for *CBS Saturday Morning*, and to appear on *GW*'s September 2022 cover.

"I loved it immediately," he tells *GW* over a video call from London, where he's resting after opening for the Rolling Stones at Hyde Park. "My manager gave it to me and I pulled it out the box, and I flipped, 'cause everything that I'd asked for was there. I immediately fell in love with the sound, because the smoothness and cleanness are real spanky. I could do my funky Prince stuff with it, but I can also play in church with it, as well."

"I could do my funky Prince stuff with it, but I can also play in church with it"

The Kingfish signature model is far from his first Fender. That honor goes to the Strat a fan bought for him after he turned in a blistering set at a blues festival years ago, when he was still best known as the must-see guitar prodigy from the Mississippi Delta. She loved his performance so much, she wanted to gift him a guitar. So, at a nearby music shop, he chose a sunburst Mexican-made Strat with a maple neck and fretboard. He's loved and lost others since then, but he still has that first Fender today.

Over a year and a half, Ingram met with the Fender guitar design team over Zoom calls to get the specifications of his signature Tele just right. An adjusto-matic bridge anchors a set of stock .011-gauge strings to a Tele body with a Strat-style body scoop; a V-shaped, caramel-colored roasted maple neck with a 12-inch radius rosewood fingerboard; Kingfish logos engraved into the pickup covers and neckplate; and his signature imprinted on the back of the headstock. The finishing touch was its Mississippi Night finish, designed to recreate the deep purple Delta night sky, speckled with a galaxy of starry sparkles.

The real meat here is in the pickups, though — a pair of custom-wound humbuckers modeled after Gary Moore's Les Paul tone and inspired by Teles played by Albert Collins, Keith Richards and Pete Townshend, which had a humbucker in the neck position. They're the perfect vehicle for delivering Ingram's scorched-Earth lead tone, but they're no one-trick ponies.

"I told them the sound I wanted — kind of a classic [*Gibson*] '57 sound, but something more versatile that I can roll back and get smooth sounds," he says. "They're custom wound and they really pack a punch. They really scream for the blues-rock

FENDER

thing, but you can also dial it back and get some neo-soul and R&B tones. Humbuckers are always going to be my sound."

Ingram quickly worked out his onstage workflow with the three-way pickup selector and dual volume and tone controls, a change from the configuration on the Custom Shop Strat he was already playing.

"I go to the middle position and use both the pickups if I'm playing rhythm, like some chords, 'cause I feel like that's the smoothest sweet spot for me," he says. "When I really want to go to the pocket playing funk, I stay on the neck position; and when I solo, I [*usually*] go to the bridge position, [*but*] I even solo sometimes on the neck position as well."

As Ingram continues to hop continents on his Juke Joint Live tour in support of his 2021 album *662*, from the U.S. to Europe to Australia and back, he'll have his Kingfish Tele Deluxe by his side.

"If you really want a guitar you can, like, shred on, it's ready made for that, all while playing some good rhythm, as well," he says. "A great guitar will make you wanna play. And that's exactly what this is."

His Lordship

PRETENDERS GUITARIST JAMES WALBOURNE UNLEASHES THE ROCK 'N' ROLL THUNDER WITH HIS NEW SIDE PROJECT — BUT DON'T CALL IT A SIDE PROJECT!

By Mark McStea

JAMES WALBOURNE WILL be familiar to *GW* readers from his work with the Pretenders, where his rootsy style perfectly complements the unmistakable vocals of Chrissie Hynde. Walbourne's current project sees him embracing the wild excesses of rockabilly and punk, unleashing a couple of EPs under the name of His Lordship. "All Cranked Up," the title track from the newest release, perfectly describes the incendiary mix of guitar-fired rock 'n' roll that Walbourne delivers — a welcome respite from a world filled with doleful singer/songwriters.

The band's first EP, *His Lordship Plays Rock'n'Roll Vol 1*, was super raw, just guitar, vocals and a drummer — but no bass player. "It's really just how things evolved," Walbourne says. "We'd had a few shows canceled due to Covid and lockdown, and I thought I'd just play some rock 'n' roll with Kris Sonne on drums at my local pub. This started to develop into a bigger thing, with people like Chrissie, Glen Matlock, [*Sex Pistols'*] Paul Cook and [*Stray Cats'*] Slim Jim Phantom turning up. We realized we'd hit on something, so we decided to just make a really quick recording to document what we were doing. We did all six songs in about 20 minutes."

The new EP, *All Cranked Up*, takes things a stage further — all original songs with the punk-meets-rock 'n' roll sensibility of Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers. "Exactly," Walbourne says. "I really love Thunders, and when I was young my dad took me to see the likes of Chuck Berry, Duane Eddy and Jerry Lee Lewis. I've always loved music with that wild, escapist feel. There doesn't seem to be so much of that these days. We've been drawing great crowds, so I can see that there's a hunger out there for this kind of music."

His Lordship's James Walbourne on stage, taking no prisoners, as usual

PROVIDED/PR

"We've been drawing great crowds, so I can see that there's a hunger out there for this kind of music"

— JAMES WALBOURNE

Walbourne's gear choices are as minimal as his music. "I used a 1963 Gibson SG with one P90. I was never a fan of them until I recorded *Break Up the Concrete* with the Pretenders in 2008; I borrowed one and realized how great they can sound. For amps I use a Fender '68 Custom Deluxe and very little in the way of effects — just a Strymon Deco [*Tape Saturation and Doubletracker*] pedal with the saturation on and some delay."

Walbourne maintains a hectic schedule, working constantly. "I'm equally committed to everything I do; there are no 'side projects' in my life," he says. "I'm in the throes of recording a new Pretenders album with Chrissie at the moment and I'm also planning to release a new album — with my wife, Kami Thompson — as the Rails, which we've been doing for quite a few years now. I definitely plan to take His Lordship as far as I can; we're really going for it — taking no prisoners."

Jason Richardson with his signature Ernie Ball Music Man Cutlass

COURTESY OF ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN

The Upside Down

JASON RICHARDSON — ONE OF GUITAR LAND'S MOST JAW-DROPPING SHREDDERS — RETEAMS WITH JAW-DROPPING DRUMMER LUKE HOLLAND FOR THEIR FIRST (YOU GUESSED IT) JAW-DROPPING ALBUM IN SIX LONG YEARS

By Gregory Adams

IT'S NOT FOR nothing that progressive shredder Jason Richardson named the lead-off track on his latest album "Tendinitis." Pulled from *II* — his second full-length collaboration with metalcore drummer Luke Holland — the piece begins deceptively chill, *vis-à-vis* a sustained orchestral swell and a few of Richardson's own bluesy, clean-channel musings. About a minute in, though, he rips into a relentlessly shreddy, tendons-tearing sequence with his fretting hand, at least until his right mitt goes on the offense with piercing, gun-turret precision. The song gives you phantom pains just hearing it.

"I've had it twice in both arms," Richardson confirms with *Guitar World* when asked about the song's namesake affliction (he further explains the piece was titled by prolific YouTube riffer Jared Dines). While it's a hell of a workout — on par, Richardson admits, with a particularly ache-inducing, outsized arpeggio section within the new record's "p00mbachu" — he also says it's been quite some time since his limbs have seized up that painfully. "I'm more conscious about it now, obviously. That was when I was relentlessly working out six days a week, playing video games, constantly using my phone and touring way more because that was [*before*] Covid. Everything would add up, and I wasn't stretching enough. It's terrible, because the only thing you can do is let it rest and take anti-inflammatories every now and then."

It's been six years since Richardson and Holland first hooked up for their debut collaboration, *I*. The delay between releases, however, had more to do with Richardson's schedule filling up once he transitioned into his lead guitarist role with All That Remains — following the 2018 death of their founding guitarist, Oli Herbert — and, of course, the pandemic. During early Covid times, however, Richardson started sketching out *II*. Eventually, the California-based guitarist took off for Bethesda, Maryland, to track with Taylor Larsen (Periphery, Asking Alexandria) and plot out the settings of his new signature plug-in through the producer/engineer's MixWave company.

Flash-forward shred momentum is no doubt a big part of *II*, but the guitarist brings a staggering number of stylistic twists to the 11-song collection. The epic, nearly eight-minute "p00mbachu" alone whizzes through girder-melting thrash, arrhythmia-inducing djent-quakes, sax-assisted smooth jazz and even a micro-blip

"I've had tendinitis twice in both arms. I'm more conscious about it now, obviously"

of vintage Nintendo-style soundscaping. That's not to say the album is without its absolutes. When it came to mixing his high-flying leads, for instance, Richardson was often having a blast waggling the stereo balance back and forth

"I've become obsessed with panning lead delays," he notes enthusiastically, adding that the dizzying technique was affixed to pretty much every major lead on the album. "It gives [*the mix*] this really huge sound, instead of being right down in the center. It's ear candy!"

While Richardson was most often relying on his crimson-coated signature Ernie Ball Cutlass — as well as a low-rolling Abasi eight-string for the record's chewier grooves — the spikier metal passages of heavy-hitters like *II's* "sparrow" were an homage to the Scythe-swingin' attack of late Children of Bodom guitarist Alexi Laiho. Richardson explains that the Finnish player left a profound impact on him as he was starting up on guitar, a feeling he tapped into again for *II*.

"I started listening to Children of Bodom a ton when Alexi passed away, because they were one of my biggest influences growing up — right along with Dream Theater," he says. "I've always wanted one of his guitars, even though it's everything I hate: I don't like pointy, I'm not a big EMG fan, it's got one knob, it has a locking nut and a Floyd Rose. But when I was growing up, I either wanted one of his or Petrucci's — and I could only find Petrucci's in music stores around me."

As of press time, Richardson was still waiting to hang a custom-order ESP Scythe at home next to his well-worn JP7, but the guitarist nevertheless channeled the feel of the late metal great's signature on "sparrow" with what he had on hand. "That pull-off riff that kicks in with all the orchestrated synth stabs? Bodom used that all the time. That's why I put that in there," he says of the track, which also found him pushing his trem system to string-flopping extremes. "I put the whammy bar down as low as I could possibly get it to go... just to see if it would work. It's actually disgustingly heavy, and kind of hilarious."

Beyond Richardson's extra-nasty imprint, *II* boasts plenty of other impressive performances. Most obvious is Holland's heavy-fracking thud, but *II* also finds Polyphia mastermind Tim Henson running through a graceful section of hybrid-picked fluidity on the record's closing, *Stranger Things*-inspired "upside down." Arguably most impressive, however, is the percussive backbone of "Polyrhythmic Pug": Richardson's wrinkly-muzzled, but sadly now-departed pet pug, D00d.

"D00d would drink water in 7/8," Richardson recalls with nostalgic incredulity of the pup, who passed away during the making of *II*. "It was literally 'slurp-slurp-slurp-and-DRINK / slurp-slurp-slurp-and-DRINK,' but every now and then he would do two slurps, or four slurps, before he swallowed — like a measure of 9/8, or something. My girlfriend had a video of him drinking, so I took that audio; I barely had to edit it to get it locked into the grid on-time."

"The song works in contrasts, tone-wise," he continues. "It starts ignorantly heavy and dark, and then that middle section is really pretty — that's where you can hear him drinking water in that pattern in the background, with his tags clinking a little bit. I even gave him a writing credit on the album. When you look, it says that song is written by Jason and D00d Richardson."

"p00mbachu" is yet another fiercely animalistic moment on *II*. The genre-mashing tune — its title a portmanteau combining cartoon *Lion King* character Pumbaa with iconic Pokémon battle beast Pikachu — was a way for Richardson to explore a few different songwriting tangents. On the one hand, Richardson's love of Hans Zimmer's 1994 score to *The Lion King* left him looking for a way to incorporate the unique ping of a kalimba — an African thumb harp — into his music. He'd also recently learned how to program the Pokémon battle theme from an old Game Boy game on Midi, as an ear-training test, which evolved into writing a similarly pulse-quickening electronic motif. Richardson and Holland somehow managed to mix those seemingly adverse directions with film noir jazz and blast-intensive metal, making for a head-scratchingly quixotic, though undoubtedly joyful rollercoaster ride.

While often brimming with song-stuffed maximalism, Richardson and Holland's *II* offers a bit of breathing room near the back end. "behold 2.0" is an instrumental reworking of a tune Richardson had first brought to his former band, Born of Osiris, for their 2011 full-length, *Discovery*, though now fit with lush haunted house organs and a pinch-squealing guitar performance. Dialing back the intensity, the ensuing "goodbye" revisits the same minor key melody through the distant din of a broken music box and shivers-inducing whistling. The low-key terrorscape, Richardson explains, was in part modeled after the vibe of modern cinema's most unsettling on-screen clown.

"I was listening to Ben Wallfish's *It* soundtrack a ton, and there's this really atonal part where Pennywise takes the kid down the sewer and bites his arm off. The music to that heavily inspired 'goodbye,'" he says. Similar to his stereo-panning lead mixes, Richardson wanted the sound design of "goodbye" to mess with your sense of spatial awareness.

"I just wanted something insanely creepy. There are footsteps in there that are supposed to sound like they're coming from behind you, [*and then travel*] all the way up to the front... like, you hear the footsteps, then there's like a rope tying sound, and then you hear a gallows drop. It's kind of demented, but that horror movie stuff is my shit."

It's easy to interpret *II* as Richardson's most cinematic effort to date. Even outside of its hyper-specific movie references, *II*'s daredevil tonal pivots and virtuosic finger gymnastics make for the perfect summer blockbuster. Richardson's also contemplating whether or not he should prep a Dolby surround mix of the album to give listeners an even more in-depth presentation of he and Mr. Holland's latest opus.

On a similar tangent, *II* may even hint at Richardson's future working with film. While the guitarist notes it's a dream of his to start scoring movies, he also feels it's a hard industry to break into, virtuoso skill set be damned. That said, Richardson reveals that he's also just wrapped up some session work for an upcoming Lifetime thriller.

"I played a shitload of classical guitar," he teases of his film score debut. "They'd already written [*the arrangement*], and sent me midi and the pre-pro stuff; I really just figured out how to play it."

Richardson is restrictively scant on spoilers, but like much of his guitar work, the plot appears to have plenty of dynamic peaks and valleys: "I'm fingerpicking classical stuff, but I did one shred guitar solo for a car chase scene. It was super fun!"

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QUOTABLE

Q: DEREK TRUCKS ON VIBRATO (AND TENSION):

"Vibrato is really where you hear someone's personality," he says. "I remember my dad taking me to see players like B.B. King, and we'd just listen to him shaking out one note for ages. You could hear his life story in that vibrato. It was exactly who he was. And yeah, some of the best moments are where you pin one note and just sting it! It can be either uncomfortable or incredible. You have to play with the tension. It's the threat of tension and release that works as the payoff. There are moments I'm not really sure what I'm doing. **I often see videos of myself and think, 'What the f*ck, how did you get there?!'** But it seemed right at the time. Everyone will be waiting for these moments to happen and you have to find different ways to get there. They might not always work but you have to try!"

— Amit Sharma

Q: EAST BAY RAY AND THE ECHOPLEX:

"I had one and had been fooling around with it... I actually put out an ambient record called *Labyrinth* – where I transferred some of the cassette stuff that I'd made in the Seventies before Dead Kennedys to digital and put them out. The layering of the Echoplex — you can do 'sound on sound' with it. So when the Dead Kennedys started, I knew my way around it. Our B-side, 'The Man with the Dogs,' has me feeding it back and moving the head back and forth at the end. It's feeding back and going crazy and we used to do that live and got to record it. "It's very difficult to do it now with the digital models. [*Laughs*] You can't go wild — **it's like a galloping horse you're trying to hold on to. Now, all the horses are very well trained... in a box**."

— Greg Prato

From GuitarWorld.com

FROM THE GW ARCHIVES

THE EIGHTIES' BEST GUITAR ALBUMS?

In our February 1990 issue, we listed the top 50 albums of the Eighties. Instead of sharing our top 10, here are albums 18 through 28. Hey, why not?

18. JOHN HIATT
(W/RY COODER)
BRING THE FAMILY (1987)

19. STANLEY JORDAN
MAGIC TOUCH (1985)

20. DAVID LINDLEY
EL RAYO X (1981)

21. THE DREGS
INDUSTRY STANDARD (1982)

22. ALLAN HOLDSWORTH
I.O.U. (1982)

23. FRANK ZAPPA
SHUT UP N' PLAY YER GUITAR (1981)

24. JEFF BECK
GUITAR SHOP (1989)

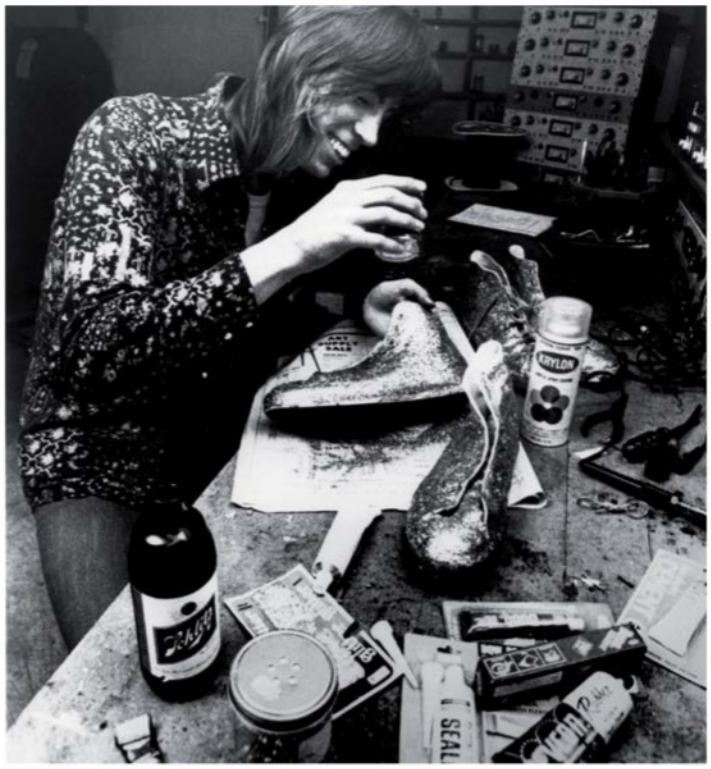
25. THE CLASH
LONDON CALLING (1980)

26. KING CRIMSON
DISCIPLINE (1981)

27. R.E.M.
MURMUR (1983)

28. ERIC CLAPTON
CROSSROADS (1988)

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

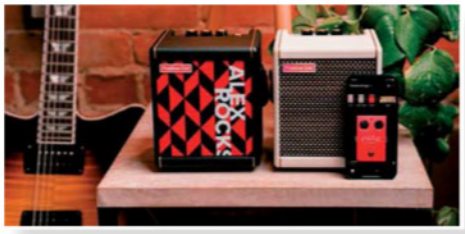


Scholz and a Schlitz: Boston guitarist/mastermind Tom Scholz puts Krylon glitter on his sneakers (and enjoys a Schlitz) sometime around 1977

IBANEZ LIFTS THE NYLON CURTAIN

Back in May, Polyphia released "Playing God," a masterful song and video that saw Tim Henson wield a mysterious custom Ibanez nylon-string. Now, after half a year of speculation about the guitar, Ibanez has officially "made it a thing." It's Henson's new signature model, the TOD10N. It sports a solid Sitka spruce top and sapele back and sides and a C-shape nyatoh neck. It's got 22 frets, a Fishman Sonicore pickup, a Tree of Death (Hey, remember their new album is called *Remember That You Will Die*) pearloid inlay, side sound port, 46mm-wide nut and 15.7" fretboard radius. The estimated street price is $699. — *Damian Fanelli*

PUT IT ON THE GRILLE



Positive Grid, the company that lets you customize your sound with the innovative Spark series of smart amplifiers, now lets you customize your amp to match your artistic vision. Recently launched at JamLab, an interactive musical experience and VIP gathering, *Spark x You* lets you feature anything you want on the front of your amp grille. Add your band logo, a picture of your cat or perhaps a mystical Stonehenge graphic. $25-$35, positivegrid.com — *Brad Tolinski*

MICK JONES/CLASH: LYNN GOLDSMITH/CORBIS/VCG VIA GETTY IMAGES DAVID LINDLEY: LUCIANO VITI/GETTY IMAGES TOM SCHOLZ: RON POWNALL/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

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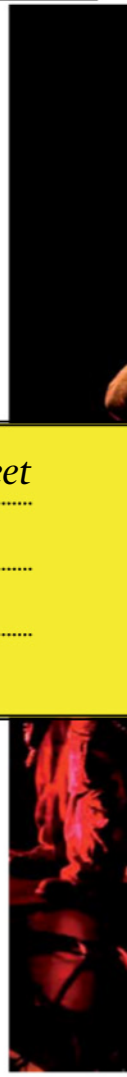
Volume 44. No. 01

NEWS OF THE (GUITAR) WORLD

Sit back, crack open that broadsheet and get ready for the biggest, splashiest, wildest guitar-centric news stories of 2022!



Words by **AMIT SHARMA**

WELL, THAT WAS quite a year, wasn't it? 2022 had more than its fair share of interesting developments — from the surprise return of Pink Floyd with new single "Hey Hey Rise Up," released in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, to the Pantera reunion that had been long-rumored (while always seeming just a tad too unlikely). Other headlines included Kirk Hammett releasing his first-ever solo recording in the form of the atmospheric *Portals* EP, proving that there's more to him than just thrash metal. Which, by the way, made an unexpected mainstream comeback, thanks to Metallica's collaboration with hit sci-fi series *Stranger Things*.

Then there was the stunning display of fretwork from Wolfgang Van Halen at the Taylor Hawkins tribute shows in London and Los Angeles; Mr. WVH nailed every part of "On Fire," "Hot for Teacher" and "Panama" in homage to the late Foo Fighters drummer, while also paying respects to his own father, who passed away two years ago. There were, of course, other moments that left us speechless — and for different reasons — from an $8K Les Paul being stuffed down someone's pants in a Canadian guitar store and some nasty guitar-centric credit card fraud, to the U.K. woman who discovered that the old Les Paul left in a closet by her father was actually made in 1960 and therefore worth a pretty penny.

Yes, it's been quite a ride — so let's go to the videotape!

Get ready for more of this sorta thing! Former Pantera vocalist Phil Anselmo [*left*] performs Pantera's "I'm Broken" with Zakk Wylde (and BLS) in May 2014

MARK WEISS/GETTY IMAGES

SOMETHING PANTERA-ESQUE THIS WAY COMES

THERE'S BEEN TALK of a Pantera reunion for many years now, though while drummer Vinnie Paul was alive it was something that always felt beyond the realm of possibility. Sadly the sticksman passed away in 2018 — some 14 years after his brother Dimebag Darrell's tragic death — leaving singer Phil Anselmo and bassist Rex Brown as the group's only surviving members (excluding early singer Terry Glaze, whose recordings are generally regarded as the work of a completely different band). The rumor mill ran wild — or should we say Wylde — back in June, and a month later it was confirmed that Zakk and Anthrax drummer Charlie Benante would be joining Anselmo and Brown in a celebration "for the brothers, for the fans, for legacy." Opinions on whether it's a reunion or a tribute will vary, but in any case the return of one of the most influential metal bands in history can only be welcomed with open arms.

And given the close bond between Wylde and Dimebag — brothers in all but name — there's no one else better placed to rip through those classic riffs and leads. See you down the front!

ENDLESS WINTER

BACK IN THE spring, Edgar Winter recruited an all-star cast of characters to appear on his new album, *Brother Johnny*, which was a tribute to the late Johnny Winter, the Firebird-toting blues pioneer. Edgar and producer Ross Hogarth curated the tracks to represent Johnny's career, but the record also included two new tunes that were written by Edgar to celebrate the life of his late sibling. The superstar guests were acquaintances of Johnny's or were heavily inspired by him — in some cases both — which is why the album featured guitar royalty in the form of Joe Bonamassa, Billy Gibbons, Steve Lukather, Joe Walsh, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Derek Trucks, Phil X and Warren Haynes — as well as A-list drummers, including Ringo Starr and the recently departed Taylor Hawkins.

HAMMETT MAKES HIS SOLO DEBUT

IT'S NO SECRET that Kirk Hammett *really* loves his horror movies. In 2012, he released the book *Too Much Horror Business*, delving deep inside his treasure trove of rare posters, costumes and props — sharing his extensive collection of monster

[*from left*] Metallica's Kirk Hammett released his first-ever solo EP, *Portals*, in 2022

A closer look at Kurt Cobain's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" Fender Mustang, which sold for a nice chunk o' change

Did you expect a new Pink Floyd single in 2022? No one did! Pink Floyd's David Gilmour on stage in Rome in 2016

memorabilia with the rest of the world. Which is why it came as little surprise that his first solo release — 2022's *Portals* EP — took inspiration from the moody soundtracks that accompanied his favorite flicks, mixing a suspenseful ambience we'd never heard from him with the metallic majesty his band were fundamental in creating. Combining Phrygian and Phrygian dominant flavors with more bluesy pentatonic lines on its four tracks, *Portals* documented the Metallica guitarist stepping out to stand on his own two feet and blowing our minds in the process — showcasing a side of himself we'd all love to hear more of.

IS THAT A LES PAUL IN YOUR PANTS OR ARE YOU JUST HAPPY TO SEE ME?

THOUGH THE CRIMINAL act itself took place at the very end of last year, it wasn't until mid January 2022 that Canadian police released CCTV footage of a man stealing a 60th Anniversary '59 Custom Shop Les Paul from Cosmo Music in Richmond Hill, Ontario. What blew most people's minds was the manner in which the ne'er-do-well conducted the theft — inserting the guitar, headstock-first, down the left leg of his pants after a quick look to make sure no one was watching. He then zipped up his jacket to cover the $8,000 guitar's body before picking up an acoustic to make it look like he was genuinely shopping, putting it down and then swiftly making his way out of the store — his identity for the most part concealed, thanks to his Covid mask. Though the Cosmo staffers were initially hopeful that the culprit would be found, it seems no arrests were ever made.

THIS CREDIT CARD GOES TO 11

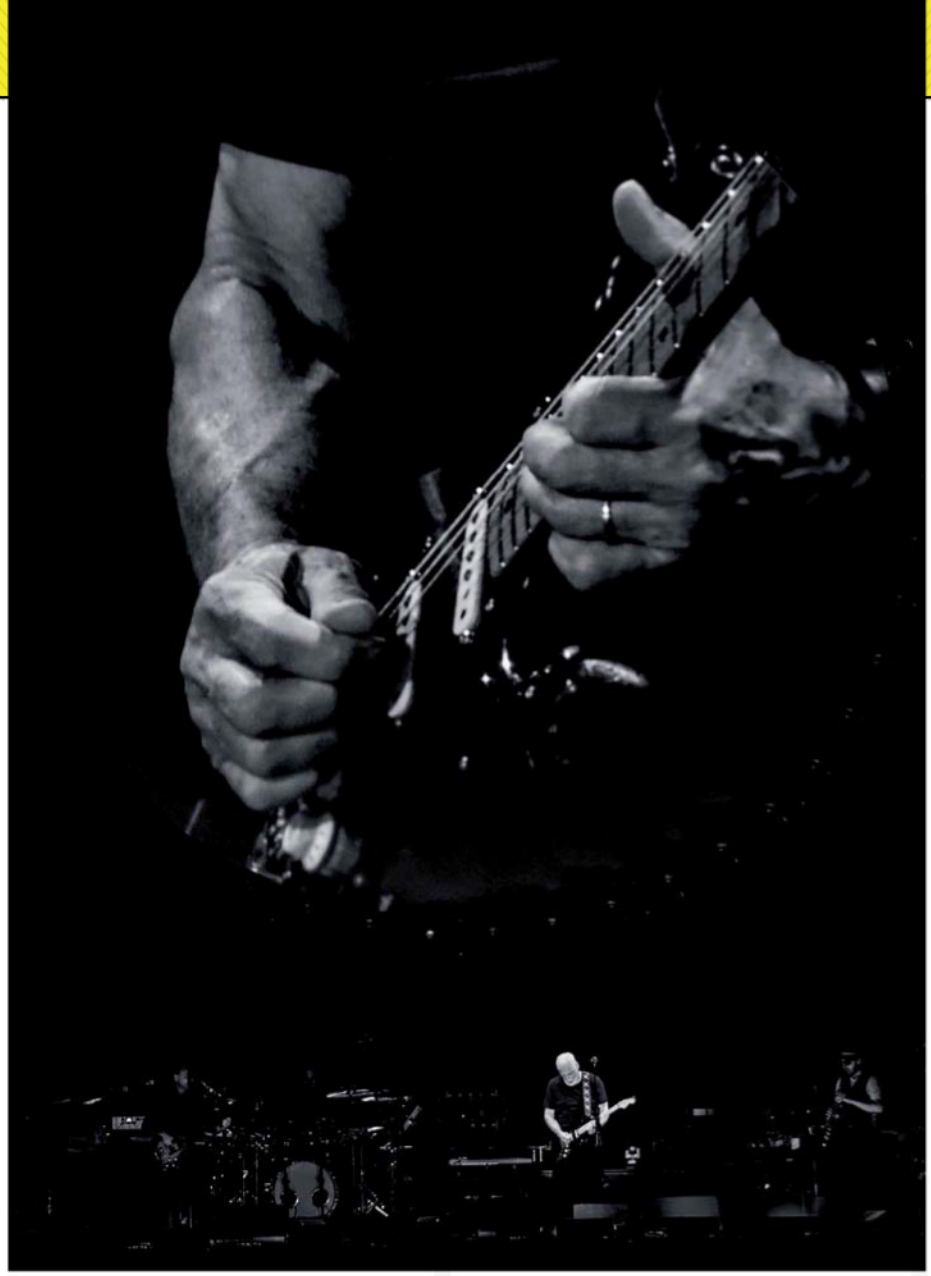
IN APRIL, THE Volusia County (Florida) Sheriff's Office confirmed that a man was on the run after using a 78-year-old woman's credit card to buy 11 Gibson Les Pauls and other musical equipment to the tune of $17,000. Mystery Shiloh Demarest, 49, had been given access to the elderly woman's credit card to buy groceries after he moved into her house to care for her sick husband. After getting found out, he initially blamed the purchases on his girlfriend and vowed to return them, but then he disappeared before law enforcement could intervene. Luckily the card had also been used for the storage facility where the gear was being kept, and after obtaining a search warrant, the police were able to recover the stolen goods. According to reports, Demarest is still at large and wanted for grand theft and fraudulent use of a credit card.

NERDVILLE'S NEWEST CITIZEN

IT'S THE KIND of story dreams are made of — an old guitar passed down from a relative, lying in a closet for years on end, later discovered to have been made during one of the most collectable eras for Gibson. The 1960 Les Paul Standard had been bought in 1967 for £50 by its now-ex-owner's father and, after several decades of gathering dust unplayed, was brought to a dealer to get valued. That dealer was ATB Guitars in Cheltenham, England, who quickly cottoned on to its worth and confirmed it was indeed one of the highly coveted 1,500 'bursts made by Gibson between 1958 and 1960 — and therefore worth around $190,000. "When I opened the case, it was the filthiest guitar I'd ever seen," said ATB owner Mike Long, who noted how "it had been stored in a closet, unplayed, since the Seventies" with "no major breaks or repairs" other than "a Bigsby added," some pickup changes and a switch wired into its original pickguard. The instrument was delivered to new owner Joe Bonamassa before his May performance at the Royal Albert Hall; he posted a photo of it to his 850K followers informing them that it would be "heading to Nerdville East for a little TLC, then some road duty."

THE NEWSTED/SATCH VAN HALEN REUNION THAT NEVER WAS

IN AN INTERVIEW with the *Palm Beach Post* that got published in April, ex-Metallica bassist Jason Newsted revealed he'd been headhunted by Alex Van Halen halfway through 2021 for a David Lee Roth-fronted Van Halen tour with Joe Satriani on guitar. He agreed to fly out to Cali-



HAMMETT: TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES COBAIN: ROB PINNEY/GETTY IMAGES GILMOUR: ROBERTO PANUCCI/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

fornia in order for the new lineup to jam, though ultimately decided it would be impossible to do those songs justice. "How could you?" reasoned Newsted. "There's nobody that can top it, so how do you show it honor? I didn't want it to be viewed as a money grab. And then it kind of just all fizzled." We'd still love to see it, to be perfectly honest.

FRUSCIANTE IS RED HOT (AGAIN)

THOUGH IT WAS announced at the end of 2019 that John Frusciante would once again be rejoining Red Hot Chili Peppers, we'd end up having to wait until this year to hear the results of said reunion — which saw Josh Klinghoffer ousted after his decade with the California-obsessed rock group. "It's absolutely John's place to be in that band," admitted Klinghoffer when the news broke, adding, "that's why I'm happy he's back with them." As fate would have it, there'd be not one but two RHCP albums released in 2022, April's chart-topping *Unlimited Love* — their first to top the *Billboards* since 2006's *Stadium Arcadium* — followed by *Return of the Dream Canteen* in October. The funk pioneers and their on-off guitarist, now in his third tenure, had clearly been making up for lost time.

NITA STRAUSS JOINS DEMI – AND MORE!

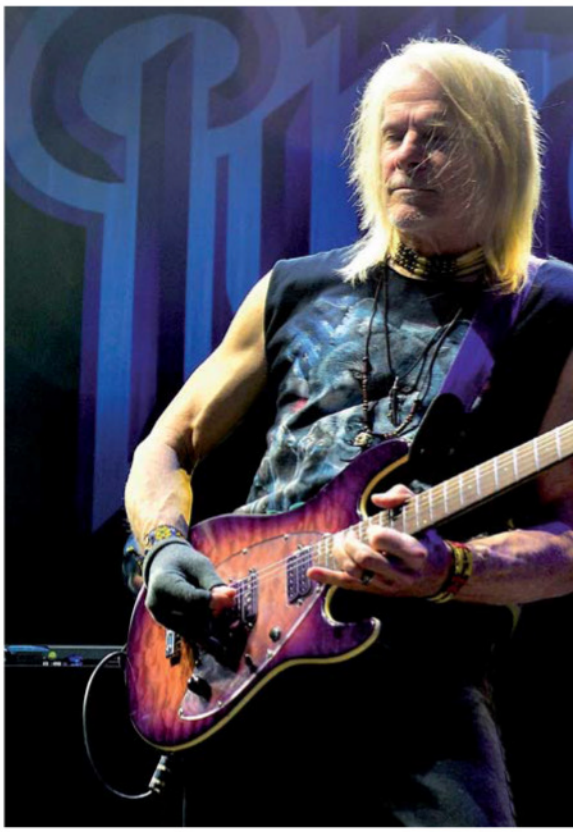
BACK IN JULY, Nita Strauss surprised much of the guitar community by announcing her departure from Alice Cooper's touring band after eight years of service, as well as canceling her own solo dates. "I'm on a flight straight into the next adventure as I post this," she wrote, while also teasing she would "be on stage again much sooner than you think." Over the next few days rumors began to circulate about her joining Demi Lovato's touring lineup, which was soon confirmed by her debut performance in the band on Jimmy Kimmel's show. For an interview with Nita, see page 66.

SMELLS LIKE A LOT OF CASH

THE LAKE PLACID Blue Mustang getting thrashed by Kurt Cobain in Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" music video ended up becoming the second most expensive guitar ever sold at auction, overtaking David Gilmour's black Fender Strat, which went for just under $4 million three years prior. Originally expected to sell for $800K, the iconic offset ended up attracting no fewer than 27 bids and parted hands for $4,550,000 — going to Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, bought with the intention of adding it to his museum-like collection of rock 'n' roll artifacts. Which, funnily enough, also includes the Gilmour Strat. The connections don't end there, either; the top spot is still held by another one of Cobain's instruments — the Martin D-18 acoustic famously used on Nirvana's *MTV Unplugged in New York* — which went for a whopping $6 million in 2020 to Røde Microphones founder Peter Freedman.

STRANGER THINGS AND THE RETURN OF "MASTER OF PUPPETS"

FOR A THRASH band formed in 1981, Metallica have managed to exist as a defiantly contemporary outfit ever since. Just listen to the modern production of their most recent album, 2016's *Hardwired... to Self-Destruct*, if you're ever in doubt. But few could have predicted 1986 track "Master of Puppets" striking a chord with the younger viewers of Netflix the way it did in July, thanks to its inclusion in *Stranger Things*. In the now-famous scene, Eddie Munson, played by Joseph Quinn, shreds on a black B.C. Rich Warlock through a Fender amp. As it turns out, the actor had actually played on the new version of the track, as did [*Metallica bassist*] Rob Trujillo's son Tye. "They sent me a couple of emails asking if I played guitar and I said yes I did," Quinn told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Then they sent the script over; I kind of imploded and went to go buy a guitar as soon as I could and started practicing."



THE PINK FLOYD SINGLE NO ONE SAW COMING

IF SOMEONE HAD told you at the beginning of the year that Pink Floyd would be releasing a new single in a matter of months, you probably wouldn't have believed them. After all, the British rock icons have only put out one album, 2014's *The Endless River*, in three decades, and the number of live appearances since their 1994 tour for *The Division Bell* can be counted on one hand. But for David Gilmour, the atrocities of the war waged by Vladimir Putin against the people of Ukraine was deeply moving and too close to home — himself revealing that his daughter-in-law is Ukrainian, thus his grandchildren are half Ukrainian. The new music featured a sample from Andriy Khlyvnyuk, the singer of Ukrainian band Boombox, and was released to "raise funds for humanitarian charities and raise morale."

STEVE MORSE: A LIGHTER SHADE OF PURPLE

AT THE END of March, Steve Morse announced he'd be taking a break from Deep Purple for the rest of 2022 in order to care for his wife Janine, who had been diagnosed with cancer. Irish blues rock guitarist Simon McBride had been drafted in to cover Morse's spot for the group's obligations over the summer, at the time telling this writer, "I know I've got big boots to fill." Four months later, Morse announced his departure from the band after 28 years — making him the longest-serving guitar player in Deep Purple history, might we add — with McBride promoted from fill-in to full-time member. "Steve has a legacy with Deep Purple that can never be forgotten, and that smile will be missed," singer Ian Gillan said.

REACH FOR THE SE SILVER SKY!

JOHN MAYER FANS around the world were thrilled by the launch of the Silver Sky as part of the more-affordable, Indonesian-produced SE series at the beginning of the year. For more info, head to page 42.

RIP, ALEXANDER DUMBLE

ON JANUARY 18, it was announced that Howard Alexander Dumble — one of the most respected and revered amp builders in history — had died. His inventions were (and still are) widely considered to be the most sought-after amps ever made, himself having built heads and combos for Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Johnson, Carlos Santana, Robben Ford, John Mayer and more. Famed for their ultra-responsive tones and top-tier musicality, designs like the Dumbleland Special, Overdrive Special and Steel String Singer became as mythical as gear can get, fetching some truly eye-watering prices on the secondhand market for those lucky enough to even find one. "I considered him a brother," Ford said. "What he did with electronics, guitar amplifiers in particular, [*remains*] unparalleled."

DUMBLE: FUTURE NITA/DEMI: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR DL MORSE: JOHNNY LOUIS/GETTY IMAGES

EBMM AND TOSIN TEAM UP FOR THE KAIZEN

ONE OF THE biggest surprises from NAMM 2022 was the partnership of Ernie Ball Music Man with Animals As Leaders virtuoso Tosin Abasi. The guitarist, who previously had his own Ibanez signature eight-string before launching his own company, Abasi Concepts, was brought on board to help design a seven-string guitar that catered to the modern-minded player. Given the Kaizen's head-turning double-cut body shape, multi-scale fingerboard and all-new high-output HT humbucker in the bridge, with a slanted mini-humbucker in the neck position, the collaboration

[*clockwise from top left*] Demi Lovato and Nita Strauss on stage in September; Steve Morse at one of his final Deep Purple gigs; Christone "Kingfish" Ingram on our September cover with his signature Fender Tele; and Gibson's Rust in Peace Flying V EXP. [*bottom left*] Robben Ford's Dumble Overdrive Special

KINGFISH: JEN ROSENSTEIN/FUTURE FLYING V: GIBSON BRANDS

spawned some forward-thinking results.

FENDER GOES FISHIN'

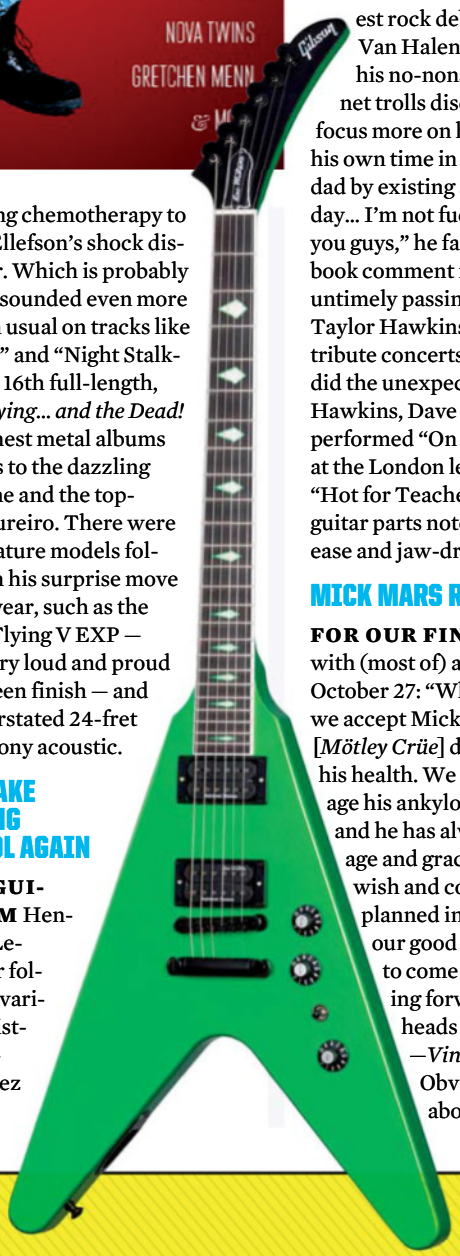
IN AUGUST, FENDER announced its first-ever signature guitar for blues prodigy Christone "Kingfish" Ingram — a Telecaster Deluxe in a breathtaking purple Mississippi Night finish, fitted with an Adjusto-Matic style hardtail and his own custom-voiced humbuckers. It certainly created a big buzz online and, given the kind of tones Ingram is prone to dialing in, it's easy to see why. For more info, head to page 26. BTW, *Guitar World* silently debuted this guitar when it appeared in Kingfish's hands on one of four September covers (which hit newsstands July 12).

DAVE MUSTAINE: AS UNSTOPPABLE AS EVER

IN THE SIX years since 2016's *Dystopia*, a lot has happened in the world of Megadeth — from Dave Mustaine being diagnosed with throat cancer and successfully undergoing chemotherapy to bassist David Ellefson's shock dismissal last year. Which is probably why Mustaine sounded even more pissed-off than usual on tracks like "We'll Be Back" and "Night Stalkers" from their 16th full-length, *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* — one of the finest metal albums of 2022, thanks to the dazzling mix of Mustaine and the top-notch Kiko Loureiro. There were also more signature models following on from his surprise move to Gibson last year, such as the Rust in Peace Flying V EXP — arriving in a very loud and proud Alien Tech Green finish — and the more understated 24-fret Songwriter Ebony acoustic.

POLYPHIA MAKE NYLON-STRING GUITARS COOL AGAIN

POLYPHIA GUITARISTS TIM Henson and Scott LePage built their following using a variety of head-twisting shred techniques on Ibanez superstrats.



What they're not known for, however, is Al Di Meola-esque nylon string patterns that wouldn't sound out of place on *Friday Night in San Francisco*. On this new track the pair decided to ditch their usual signature models for something a bit more leftfield (see page 31 for more info), and melted minds in the process. "Playing God" reminded us why Polyphia have become the front-runners in a new generation of players, boldly cross-pollinating fusion with electronica in ways few have ever dared.

WOLFGANG STUNS US ALL (IN A GOOD WAY!)

AS WELL AS releasing one of the finest rock debuts of 2021, Wolfgang Van Halen has become legendary for his no-nonsense approach to Internet trolls discourteously inviting him to focus more on his father's music or, indeed, his own time in Van Halen. "I honor my dad by existing and doing what I do every day... I'm not fuckin' playing 'Panama' for you guys," he famously replied to a Facebook comment in August last year. After the untimely passing of Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins in March, which led to the tribute concerts in September, however, he did the unexpected. Partnering with Justin Hawkins, Dave Grohl and Josh Freese, he performed "On Fire" and "Hot for Teacher" at the London leg, and then "Panama" and "Hot for Teacher" in L.A., delivering the guitar parts note-for-note with effortless ease and jaw-dropping conviction.

MICK MARS RETIRES; JOHN 5 IS HIRED

FOR OUR FINAL item, we'll leave you with (most of) an email we received on October 27: "While change is never easy, we accept Mick's decision to retire from [*Mötley Crüe*] due to the challenges with his health. We have watched Mick manage his ankylosing spondylitis for decades, and he has always managed it with courage and grace... We will carry out Mick's wish and continue to tour the world as planned in 2023... We are grateful that our good friend John 5 has agreed to come on board and join us moving forward. We'll see all you Crüeheads out on the road!"

—Vince, Tommy & Nikki

Obviously, stay tuned for more about this development! GW

CALLING ALL SONIC SCULPTORS, MORE TOOLS HAVE ARRIVED.

INTRODUCING FIVE NEW PEDALS FROM THE FOUNDER OF EFFECTS.

Maestro

SHAPE YOUR SOUND

MAESTROELECTRONICS.COM

OUR FAVORITE GEAR OF THE YEAR

Like the headline says, here's a heapin' helpin' of new gear that struck our fancy over the past 12 months

WHEN IT COMES to gear, we reckon 2022 is a year that'll end up being remembered fondly — for the most part. There were some big surprises, such as the arrival of the Line 6 DL4 mk2, which had some serious updates from the original that was launched 23 years ago, and a limited-edition replica of Noel Gallagher's prized ES-355 from Gibson — a storied instrument that had been seen on the world's biggest stages and heard on some of the biggest selling recordings of the last two and a half decades.

As for innovations coming from across the pond, we were most impressed by Blackstar's headline-stealing St. James series (coupling breathtaking tones with modern functionality inside deceptively light packages), the Philip Sayce-approved Octone fuzz from Pedal Pawn and Monty's Guitars' recreation of the pickups inside the Greeny Les Paul famously owned by Peter Green, Gary Moore and Kirk Hammett. Which, by the way, found a new lease of life in the sold-out Gibson Murphy Lab-aged Collector's Edition, limited to just 50. And speaking of artist models, new products bearing the names of guitar legends like John Mayer, Scott Ian and Jeff Loomis certainly created a bit of a buzz in-store and online — and for all the right reasons. So without further ado, here's our roundup of the very best gear of 2022.

PRS GUITARS

SE SILVER SKY

$849, PRSGUITARS.COM

Few would have been surprised by the announcement of the John Mayer Silver Sky joining the PRS SE series back in January; there was clearly a market for it and Mayer himself would have likely encouraged making it accessible for all players. It's also no shock that the guitars made by the Indonesian Cor-Tek factory are of extremely high quality — and almost scarily close to the boutique craftsmanship of their premium, U.S.-made originals. The main differences with this Silver Sky lie in the body wood (poplar in place of the U.S. model's alder), the pickups (SE versions of the 635JM set) and the tuners (non-locking instead of locking). The fingerboard radius is also ever so slightly flatter on the SE models — 8.5" instead of 7.25" — though the difference is negligible.

By **AMIT SHARMA — WITH A BIT OF PAUL RIARIO AND DAMIAN FANELLI**

POSITIVE GRID

SPARK MINI

$229, POSITIVEGRID.COM

If there's one practice amp that's ruled the roost in recent years, most of us would be inclined to agree it's the Spark 40. Which is why, back in February, there was a lot of excitement around Positive Grid announcing a new downsized version that presented its endless array of features in a smaller package, now running at 10 watts. The Spark Mini is fully compatible with the Spark app, granting access to 33 amps, 43 effects and 10,000-plus tones via the ToneCloud community. Like its big bro, the Spark Mini is also an effective learning tool — with real-time chords, tempo controls for practicing and the all-new Smart Jam function where the amp builds backing tracks based on what you play. With its infinite tonal options, 8° angled dual speakers, Bluetooth connectivity and eight hours of play time from full charge, Positive Grid are calling it "the biggest smallest rig ever." It's not hard to see why.

TAYLOR

URBAN IRONBARK GUITARS

$2,799/$2,999, TAYLORGUITARS.COM

So yes, Taylor revamped its 500 Series, outfitting two acoustics with a new tonewood: Urban Ironbark. The Grand Concert 512ce and Grand Auditorium 514ce (the slightly more expensive of the duo) now boast the responsibly sourced wood, which Taylor says brings an "entirely new flavor of acoustic tone and a bold, rich and sweet sound." Both feature Urban Ironbark backs and sides, paired with torrefied spruce tops and a new voicing recipe that uses Taylor's V-Class bracing. Urban Ironbark — a name given by Taylor to red ironbark (Eucalyptus sideroxylon), a member of the eucalyptus family — is the second tonewood used by Taylor and sourced in collaboration with a SoCal-based tree-management organization. The collab sees Taylor looking to source wood from urban trees that need to be removed (because they're at the end of their lifecycle or for safety reasons). Hey, Andy Powers — I'll trade you a tree for a Taylor!

BLACKSTAR

ST. JAMES

$1,199-$1,499, BLACKSTARAMPS.COM

Announced in May and launched at NAMM, the new amp series from Blackstar was advertised as "the lightest 50-watt valve guitar amps on Earth." Indeed, when *GW* made it over to Booth 5723 at the Anaheim Convention Center, we got to see just how innovative the new amps were — both in weight and tone. Designed with Celestion, the new 12" Zephyr speakers mirror the tones produced by Vintage 30s at a fraction of the weight. It uses a Switched-Mode Power Supply instead of a transformer; meanwhile, the candlenut plywood used to house the amps ends up drastically reducing their overall mass. But their ingenuity didn't stop there; as well as the stunning tones we heard from the higher-gain 6L6 and pedal-friendly EL34 versions, Blackstar also included three power modes (50-watts, sag and 2-watt) and the same DSP speaker sim system found on their Dept 10 pedals, allowing users to edit tones through their Cab Rig software via USB. These could very well be the finest amps Blackstar have ever made.

PEDAL PAWN

OCTONE

$220, PEDALPAWN.COM

Instead of producing a wide variety of effects that cater to all different tastes, you get the impression that U.K. company Pedal Pawn stick to what they truly know and love — which, as we've learned in recent years, involves recreating the tones of Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Their Fuzz and Texan Twang pedals are based on the same schematics as SRV's prized Cesar Diaz units, while last year's Gypsy Vibe successfully recreated the full-fat throb and swirl of the psychedelic Sixties like few stompboxes before it. This year's Octone, built with NOS germanium diodes, is their take on the Roger Mayer-built Octavia used by Jimi and is just about as fine as fuzz gets. It comes with the promise that it can maintain a clean and clear octave effect in all areas of the neck, even more so with the boost cranked. Much like their other pedals, there's a vintage fatness that can turn just about any kind of amp into an absolute tone machine, as demonstrated by owner Chris King Robinson's daredevil demos through a micro Marshall MS2.

LINE 6

DL4 MK2

$329, LINE6.COM

Few delay pedals have been seen on as many boards as the original Line 6 DL4, which was originally launched in 1999 and became one of the world's first digital modeling units for guitar players, offering 15 different delay effects as well as tap tempo and looping at a very reasonable price. Its popularity hasn't waned — Kirk Fletcher, for example, still swears by his, recently citing his feature-rich original as one of the three pedals he simply couldn't live without. Back in March (as revealed in *GW*), Line 6 confirmed they were bringing out a new version in a smaller chassis, with all the classic features plus 15 new delays from the HX family, a longer looper time, more connectivity and even studio-quality options for reverb. *GW*'s Paul Riario awarded "major kudos to Line 6 for preserving the core of the DL4's intuitiveness and widespread appeal in the MkII" and described it as a "serious contender to replace your current fave delay(s) on your pedalboard" with no downsides.

FENDER

HAMMERTONE EFFECTS PEDALS

$79.99-$299.99, FENDER.COM

Fender describes their new Hammertone pedals as "no-nonsense stompbox effect(s)," And if there's anything we love hearing, it's pedals that are uncomplicated and practical for those of us who still love to twist knobs. Fender got savvy by introducing a compact and easy-to-use pedal series that spans the classic staples of Overdrive, Distortion, Fuzz, Chorus, Delay, Reverb, Fuzz, Metal, Chorus and Space Delay — guitar effects that are not only indispensable, but now wallet-friendly. Compared to their superb "bigger-boxed" pedal range, we found Fender crammed some massive sounds into each of these entry-level Hammertone effects. Each rugged pedal comes with a simple control layout, smaller anodized aluminum chassis, true-bypass operation, top-mounted input/output jacks and 9-volt power with most having a magnetic back-panel battery compartment that's accessed by a single screw. What's cool is the status LEDs light up in the same color as the graphic logo and control knobs. Considering the variety of essential tones, affordability and reduced size, we believe Fender nailed it with Hammertone.

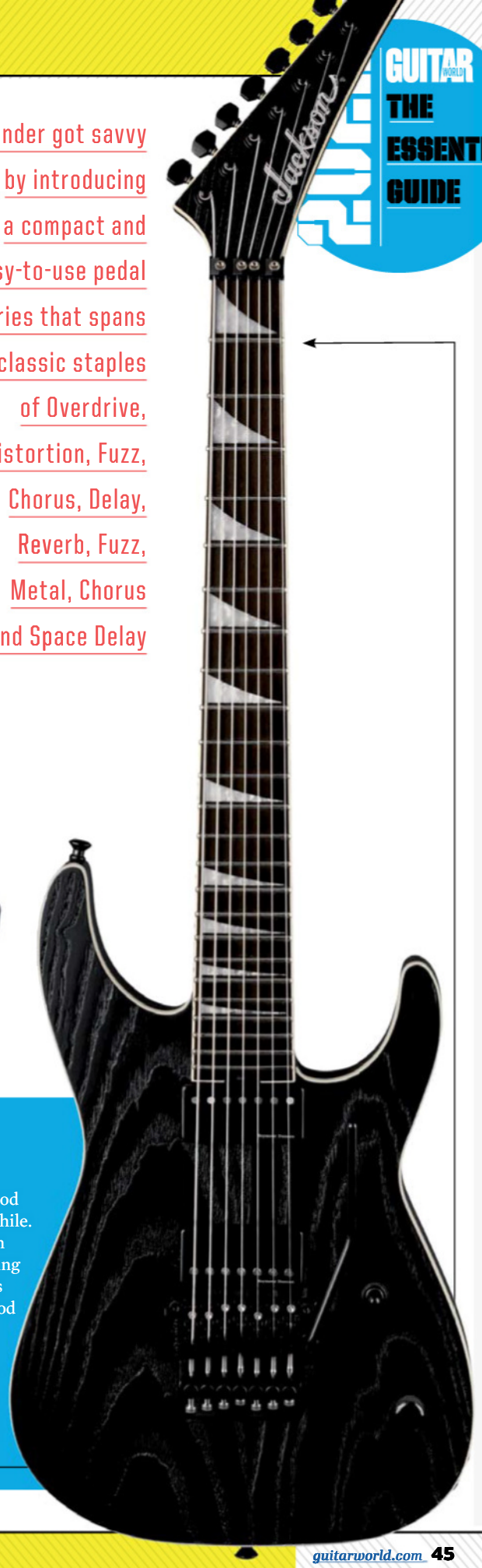
Fender got savvy by introducing a compact and easy-to-use pedal series that spans the classic staples of Overdrive, Distortion, Fuzz, Chorus, Delay, Reverb, Fuzz, Metal, Chorus and Space Delay

JACKSON

JEFF LOOMIS SOLOIST SL7

$1,699, JACKSONGUITARS.COM

Unveiled at NAMM 2020, the Jeff Loomis Pro Series Kelly Ash presented a good case for being one of the best metal-friendly signatures we've seen in a good while. Similar things can be said of its successor, the SL7 seven-string, which Jackson launched in March. It features the same sandblasted ash top as the Kelly, making it one of the most visually striking instruments of 2022. "We came up with this idea of charred earth, where you can actually feel the rough grooves in the wood with your hand," Loomis told us just before the big announcement. "I love it because it looks so metal, but at the same time it doesn't fingerprint up with sweat marks and all that stuff." The new Soloist features a 26.5" scale length, a basswood body, a Floyd Rose 1500 Series double-locking trem and the Arch Enemy guitarist's very own Seymour Duncan Blackouts, which use Alnico 5 magnets instead of the standard ceramics for a more articulate and dynamic kind of aggression.



KHDK

SCOTT IAN JSL

$249, KHDKELECTRONICS.COM

Given how quickly last year's Scott Ian signature KHDK pedals sold out, it made sense for the-high gain pedal specialists (co-founded by Kirk Hammett) to make a new batch. The new JSLs, limited to 333 units, feature a redeveloped circuit for "more clarity and metal" as well as some incredible artwork courtesy of Mario Lopez depicting a young Ian slaying zombies with his trusty Jackson King V. Like the twin-button originals, there's a preamp section and a boost — each with its own dedicated EQ — designed to revisit the sounds from the guitarist's early Anthrax and Stormtroopers of Death days. It's the only pedal "certified by the Anti-Zombie Space Federation, powered by cold fusion, lasers and a stunning pair of Bermuda shorts."

MONTY'S GUITARS

BETHNAL GREEN HUMBUCKERS

$600, MONTYSGUITARS.COM

Founded by U.K. guitarist Matt Gleeson just over a decade ago, Monty's Guitars has become one of the most respected independent pickup manufacturers in the world. They've produced sets for Mark Knopfler, Pete Townshend and Ed O'Brien, as well as developed a signature pickup for Bill Steer of Carcass. At the beginning of the year they unveiled a recreation of the PAF humbuckers found in the Greeny Les Paul, which has an incredibly distinct sound, thanks to the neck pickup being wired backwards. "I was lucky enough to get my dirty mitts on this guitar while it was living in London," said Gleeson, explaining how he "hungrily took copious measurements and readings of the pickups." Using period-correct parts such as Alnico II magnets and unpotted coils, the new pickups could very well be the closest you'll ever get to Greeny's tones.

These new pickups could very well be the closest you'll ever get to Greeny's tones – since it doesn't look like Kirk Hammett will be parting with Greeny anytime soon!

EPIPHONE

POWER PLAYERS

$279, EPIPHONE.COM

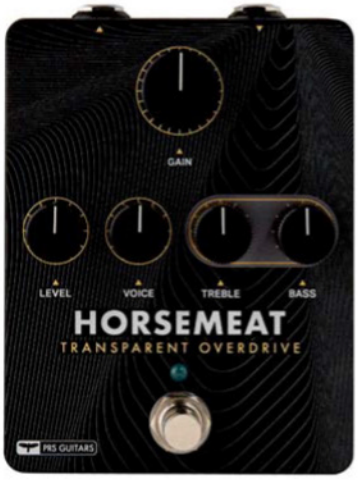
When they're done right, beginner guitars are cost-effective and functional up to a basic level; after all, no one really knows if they're a lifer at that point. The Power Players unveiled by Epiphone over the summer, however, took that a step further, aiming to give newcomers the very best possible start to help ensure it's a journey that inspires them for years to come. The new 3/4+ versions of the Les Paul and SG feature Epiphone's 650R and 700T ceramic humbuckers, a mahogany body and a bolt-on mahogany neck that has a sculpted heel for easier access to the upper frets, capped by an Indian laurel fingerboard. Aimed at those with smaller fingers or still early on in their six-string quest, these guitars are made to inspire — and are a whole lot more comfortable than the full fat slab of a real Les Paul or never-ending neck of an SG. If you're looking to get someone their first guitar and one that gives them the best chance of sticking with it, look no further.

PRS GUITARS

PRS PEDALS

$219-$349, PRSGUITARS.COM

Your eyes do not deceive you; PRS has officially made a big splash into the pedal pool with three new stompboxes. According to Paul Reed Smith, "...these first three designs are the start of something very cool." And we don't disagree. The "Horsemeat" Transparent Overdrive, "Mary Cries" Optical Compressor and "Wind Through the Trees" Dual Flanger are meticulously built to last as premium-designed pedals with stellar tone. The Horsemeat is a built-from-scratch circuit designed to enhance your tone without coloring it. The pedal uses germanium diodes and can be used as a clean boost, straight overdrive or to push the front end of an amp's preamp section. PRS likes to say that the Wind Through the Trees Dual Analog Flanger is best described as two flangers fighting each other, resulting in a sound reminiscent of the wind whipping through the trees — hence the name. The PRS Mary Cries Optical Compressor is based on the LA-2A tube compressor and aims to thicken your sound, curb signal peaks, increase sustain and push your tone with definition and clarity.



GAMECHANGER AUDIO

BIGSBY

$379, GAMECHANGERAUDIO.COM

A lot of great pedals were released over the course of the last 12 months — though very few can rival this polyphonic pitch shifter in terms of coolness. Designed in collaboration with Fender to recreate the string-bending and vibrato effects of a Bigsby tremolo arm, Gamechanger also managed to make their pedal look like one — making for some serious 'board eye candy. A bit like a real Bigsby, this pedal is "always on," its hybrid algorithm and buffered bypass ensuring smooth transitioning, to the point where it can go well beyond the famous vibrato tailpiece in terms of functionality. There's a detune parameter to add some realness and imperfection, as you would expect from traditional mechanical hardware — another clever inclusion to make for a more authentic playing experience.

BOSS

RE-202/RE-2 SPACE ECHO

$419/$259, BOSS.INFO

Famed for the rhythmic repeats of its three evenly spaced heads and warm analog preamp circuitry, the original Roland RE-201 Space Echo of 1974 quickly became one of the leading tape echo units of its time. In 2007 Boss recreated its sound and functionality in a much smaller package — the twin pedal RE-20 — and with impressive results. This year they unveiled the next generation of the Space Echo in the form of the triple footswitch RE-202 as well as the single-sized RE-2, faithfully recalling the sound and behavior of the original like never before. With controls for saturation, new or aged tape simulation, a fourth playback head, programmable memory, MIDI, EQ and more, plus options for reverb and external footswitches, it's easy to see why Boss led the charge for tape delays in 2022.

SHARON LATHAM

GIBSON

NOEL GALLAGHER ES-355

$9,999, GIBSON.COM

It really doesn't matter whether you're an Oasis fan or not; the Murphy Lab-aged Custom Shop remake of Noel Gallagher's famous 1960 ES-355 is the kind of guitar all of us would love to own. The original was bought in London not long before the 1997 recording sessions for *Be Here Now* and would become one of Gallagher's most relied-upon weapons for live performances, himself describing it as "the greatest guitar I've ever played" because of its ability to "do anything" and "become a part of me." Limited to just 200 units globally and equipped with a multi-ply bound maple body, a mahogany neck, an ebony fretboard, a Varitone switch and a Bigsby B7, Gibson claim it to be "the pinnacle of guitar craftsmanship." It would be hard to disagree with them there.

SOLDANO

SLO MINI

$249, SOLDANO.COM

Over the last few years we've seen some exceptional solid-state miniature versions of legendary high-gain amps like the Diezel VH-4 and Friedman BE-100. In June it was announced that Soldano would be following suit with an affordable/portable version of the SLO-100 — the flagship that had been heavily used by Mick Mars, George Lynch and Warren DeMartini, and even been seen in the hands of EVH and Prince. The SLO Mini delivers the same kind of rich overdrive Soldano's amps have long been renowned for, with options for a crunch or overdrive mode, a normal or deep voicing, a three-band EQ as well as controls for presence and an effects loop. Showcasing its tones from blues to metal in the promo video for the amp's unveiling, Lynch said, "It makes my fingers do happy shit." What more could you want?

TC ELECTRONIC

PLETHORA X3

$369, TCELECTRONIC.COM

TC Electronic have been responsible for some innovative products over the years, and 2020's Plethora X5 was no exception. In May they debuted the X3, which — like its predecessor — gives users access to all of their TonePrint pedals, from delays, reverbs and almost every kind of modulation. As you might have guessed, the slightly downsized unit is able to run three effects simultaneously rather than five, though it still has space for 127 customizable boards and the ability to hold 75 TonePrint slots. It also contains a looper and tuner, which means — apart from drives and distortions — it covers virtually all the bases in one clever, compact box.

VICTORY

V1 SERIES PEDALS

$249 (each), VICTORYAMPS.COM

Over the years, U.K. amp builder Victory has assembled a stellar set of tube and pedal amps. Now the company has expanded all five of its amp families — Duchess, Jack, Kraken, Sheriff and Copper — with its new V1 pedals. Designed with Adrian Thorpe of ThorpyFX, the pedals were created with one goal: "To create a one-button footswitch pedal that encapsulated each Victory family of amps." The Duchess emulates the V40 Duchess, promising vintage U.S. tones in the form of a clean boost or crunchy gains. The Copper offers "classic British rock tone" while the Jack is all about "gain, barky sounds and over-the-top gain." The Sheriff sets its sights on Eighties hard rock sounds, and the Kraken V1 promises a range of tones, from the U.K.-style gain of the Kraken VX's Channel One to the U.S. high-gain sounds of Channel Two.

Victory's V1 pedals were designed with Adrian Thorpe of Thorpy FX "to create a pedal that encapsulated each Victory family of amps"

SQUIER

40TH ANNIVERSARY JAZZMASTER VINTAGE EDITION

$599, FENDER.COM

As noted in last month's roundup of the best offset guitars, there were some fantastic new additions from Squier this year in celebration of their 40th anniversary since the brand's relaunch in 1982. This Jazzmaster could very well be our pick of the bunch, thanks to its winning combination of a Seafoam Green finish, gold anodized pickguard and duo of Alnico 5 Fender-designed single-coil pickups. Beyond that, the satin vintage-tinted neck finish, old-school logos, aged chrome hardware and six-saddle floating bridge make it a retro tone machine that looks a lot more expensive than it actually is. GW

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– ANDY TIMMONS

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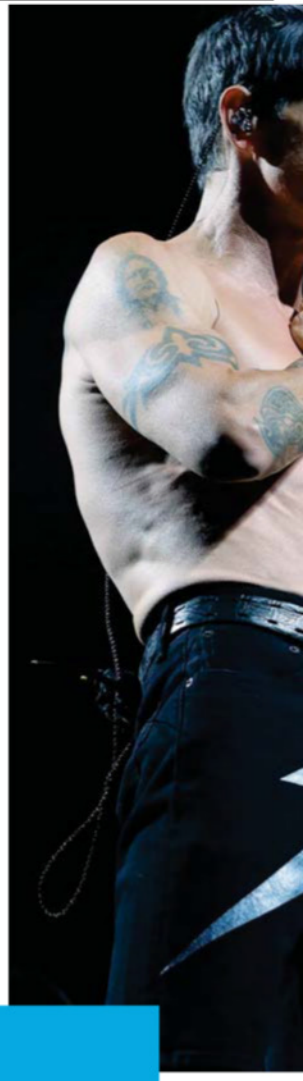
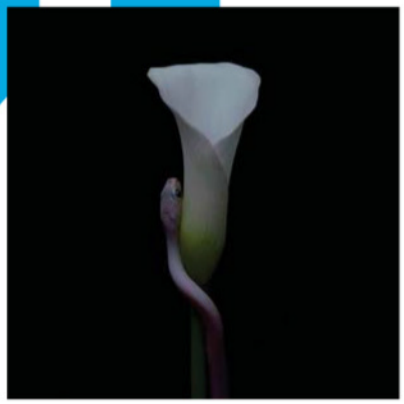
2022 GUITAR WORLD THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

ALL THE BEST

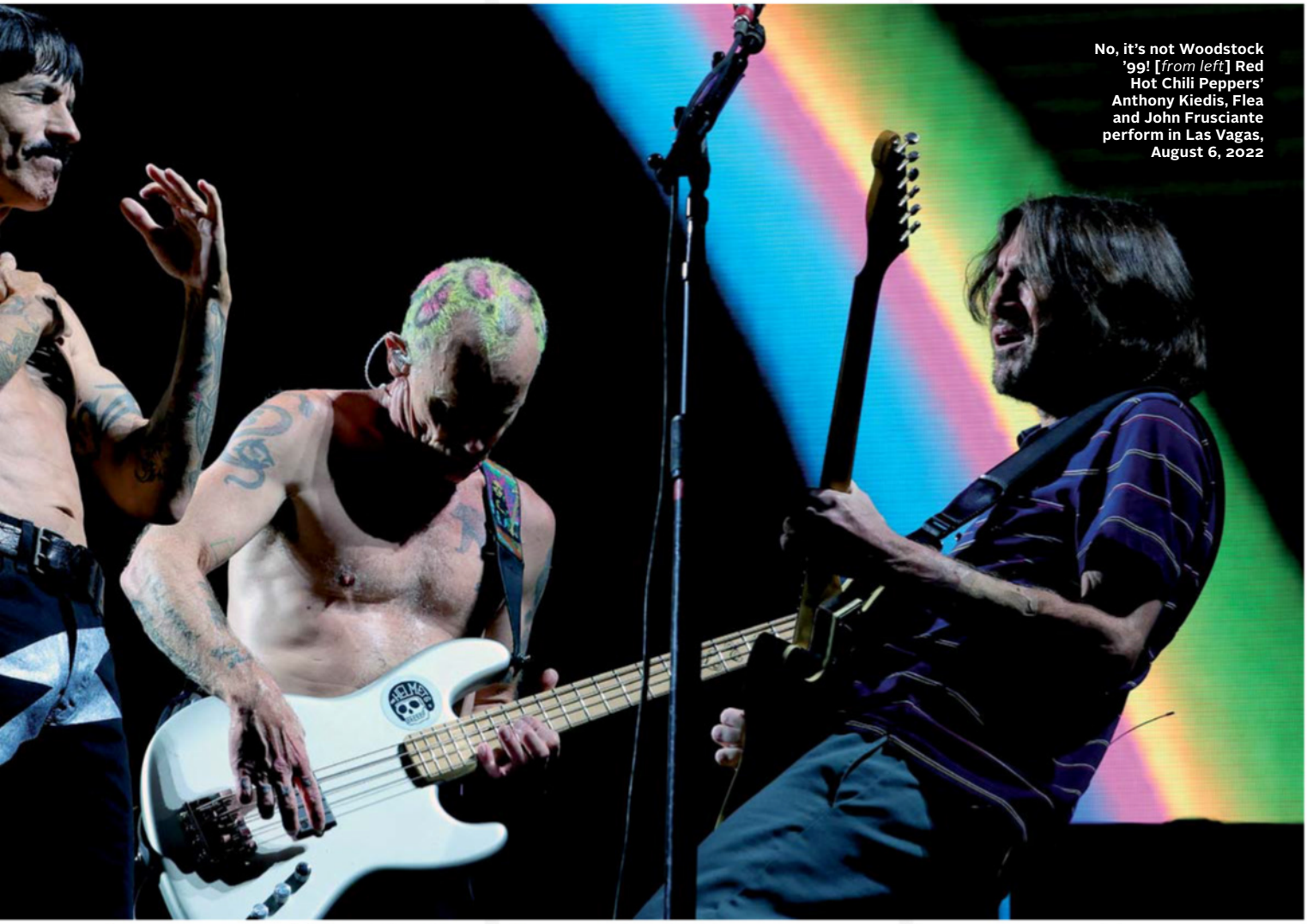




Pro players weigh in on 2022's best new albums, songs, guitar moments, guitarists of the year and more

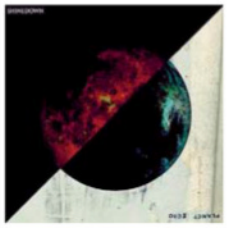
Compiled by **DAMIAN FANELLI, JOE BOSSO, JIM BEAUGEZ, JON WIEDERHORN, AMIT SHARMA AND ADAM KOVAC**

TO HELP US sort through the new music that blasted out of our noise-canceling headphones (and earbuds!) in 2022, we turned to a horde of guitarists — gifted men and women with their noses to the grindstone and their ears to the ground — and asked them to name **their favorite guitar-centric albums, songs, guitar solos** and **riffs** from 2022 — plus their favorite 2022 **guitar moments, new bands/guitarists** and **gear.** Some of them even named their **guitarist of the year,** which, we have to admit, makes for some interesting reading! Dig in — and enjoy! — *DF*



No, it's not Woodstock '99! [*from left*] Red Hot Chili Peppers' Anthony Kiedis, Flea and John Frusciante perform in Las Vagas, August 6, 2022

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES



JOHN PETRUCCI

SONG: "Tippa My Tongue," Red Hot Chili Peppers
RIFF: "Kill or Be Killed," Muse
SOLO: "Desolation," Joe Satriani
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Arch Echo
GEAR: Archetype: Petrucci plugin from Neural DSP
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen at the Taylor Hawkins tribute concert in London. I couldn't believe how brilliantly he played.
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): *Swinging Strings*, Joscho Stephan
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Tommy Emmanuel. I've been a fan for years. I saw him recently at Town Hall (New York City), and he was astonishing.

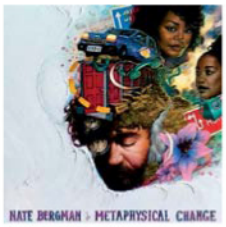
CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM

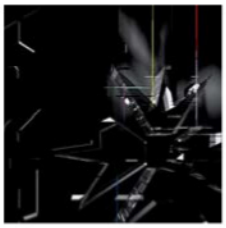
SONG: "All Cranked Up," His Lordship
ALBUM: *Crown*, Eric Gales
RIFF: "Bad Habit," Steve Lacy
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: His Lordship
GEAR: ProCo Lil RAT distortion pedal and the new Fender Kingfish "Mississippi Night" signature Telecaster
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): *The Very Best of Prince*
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Eric Gales

KYLE SIPRESS (The Devil Wears Prada)

SONG: "Pass the Nirvana," Pierce the Veil
ALBUM: A toss-up between Meshuggah's *Immutable*, Cloakroom's *Dissolution Wave* and Viagra Boys' *Cave World*
RIFF: Botch, "One Twenty Two"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Dying Wish
GEAR: My new Dunable Gnarwhal. It has a sick, Gold/Green color-shift paint job, Bare-knuckle Blackhawk pickups and an Ever-tune bridge. It's stacked!
GUITAR MOMENT: Finally seeing Limp Bizkit live. I've always been a very mild fan, but I'm a full Bizkit fan after their live show. Also, the fact that Rage Against the Machine are finally able to play their comeback tour is pretty huge.

[*from left*] Tosin Abasi on stage with Animals As Leaders in Sacramento in April — and Jack White in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in mid October





MIKE STRINGER (SPIRITBOX)

SONG: "Spillways" by Ghost! I always have it stuck in my head, and the solo rips.
RIFF: "The Abysmal Eye" by Meshuggah. I love how they build off of the main riff — and how pummeling it is the entire time. Genius!
SOLO: Steve Vai's solo in Polyphia's "Ego Death." I love how it's a more unconventional solo; it sounds so unique.
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Gel
GEAR: The Microcosm by Hologram Electronics. It's very easy to get lost in it.
GUITAR MOMENT: When Herman Li's guitar exploded while he was playing Hellfest. The footage is wild; the neck pops off the body, and he just calmly walks off and switches to another guitar. What a pro!
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Brandon Ellis from the Black Dahlia Murder. His feel and precision are incredible.

JOE BONAMASSA

SONG: "Made Up Mind," Bonnie Raitt
ALBUM: *Just Like That...*, Bonnie Raitt
RIFF: "Fear of the Dawn," Jack White
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen breaking out "Hot for Teacher" at Wembley.
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Eddie 9V
GEAR: A Keeley two-knob Compressor Mini
GUITAR MOMENT: Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee playing together again at Red Rocks and Wembley.
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): The Band, *The Last Waltz*
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Steve Vai

NITA STRAUSS

SONG: Polyphia, "Playing God." Tim Henson and Scott LePage are constantly innovating what we do as guitarists.
ALBUM: Animals As Leaders, *Parrhesia*. I've been waiting patiently along with the rest of the world for the new AAL, and this album is crushingly good.
RIFF: Lamb of God, "Grayscale"
SOLO: Arch Enemy, "Handshake with Hell"
GEAR: I'm still so obsessed with the new [*Ibanez*] JIVA X Ghost that came out in the summer. I've always loved a white guitar and I finally got to design one.
GUITAR MOMENT: My hero, Kane Roberts, rejoining the Alice Cooper touring lineup. Purely as a fan, I think it's really awesome. I got to play with them in October and see the show for the first time, and it was just so good.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Wolfgang Van Halen! The guitar community knew all along how incredible a guitarist he is, but I felt like this was the year that he got recognized by the world in his own right.

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

SONGS: "OnlyFangs" by Haunted Shores. Misha [*Mansoor*] and Mark [*Holcomb*] are so incredibly talented, and their Haunted Shores project is where they go insane in the greatest way.
ALBUM: Animals As Leaders, *Parrhesia*. The playing by Tosin [*Abasi*] and Javier [*Reyes*] on this album is other-worldly. Seeing them live this year showcases how perfect they are as performers.
RIFF: "Phantoms" by Meshuggah. The breakdown at the end of that song is the greatest. Anyone who has heard that song knows what I'm talking about. It's another example of why Meshuggah is in a class of their own.
GEAR: The [*EVH*] SA126 guitar. You're going to have to take my word for it. [*For a visual, check out page 65.*]
GUITAR MOMENT: The fact that guitar is working its way back into the mainstream again is my favorite guitar moment of the year. From Nita playing with Demi Lovato, Olivia Rodgrigo and Lorde's new albums, bands like Måneskin getting popular and the Taylor Hawkins tribute being broadcast on national television, it really seems like guitars and playing instruments are making a

noticeable resurgence.
THE ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Intervals, *Circadian*. It's been my most-listened-to album for the past two years, so it's my pick for 2021 and 2022. Aaron Marshall is my favorite guitar player of today. An important thing my dad always said: When it comes to soloing, you should be able to hum the solo. On top of Aaron's ridiculous chops, he manages to work in the catchiest melodies. His melodic sensibility is one of my favorite things about his playing.

AYRON JONES
SONG: "Plant Zero" by Shinedown
ALBUM: *Planet Zero* by Shinedown
RIFF: "Planet Zero" by Shinedown
SOLO: Steve Vai, "Teeth of the Hydra"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Marcus King
GUITAR MOMENT: Mike McCready smashing his shit during the last show of his Euro tour.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Steve Vai

BRIAN BAKER (BAD RELIGION, FAKE NAMES)
ALBUM: Marcus King, *Young Blood*
SOLO: Gavin Caswell, "Hell Is in Your Head" by Senses Fail
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Crisis Actor
GEAR: Bowman Audio Endeavors Stool Pigeon
GUITAR MOMENT: Tom Bukovac joins Ann Wilson's band and just kills, kills, kills it.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Billy Strings

MYLES KENNEDY
RIFF: Spiritbox, "Rotoscope"
SOLO: Julian Lage, "Tributary"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Spiritbox
GEAR: Universal Audio Apollo interface
GUITAR MOMENT: Mark Tremonti announcing his Frank Sinatra record.

MARK TREMONTI
SONG: Eric Gales with Joe Bonamassa, "I Want My Crown"
ALBUM: Sleep Token, *This Place Will Become Your Tomb*
RIFF: Madison Cunningham, "Pin It Down"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Sleep Token
GEAR: Boss OC-5
GUITAR MOMENT: Discovering a new artist like Madison Cunningham.

SARAH TUDZIN (ILLUMINATI HOTTIES)
NEW ARTIST/GUITARIST: Sweet Pill
GEAR: Critter & Guitari Organelle M
GUITAR MOMENT: Apparently someone pooped in the pit at a Turnstile show... Iconic? I hope they're OK.
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): *Reset* by Panda Bear and Peter Kember
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Big Thief's Buck Meek

BUCK MEEK (BIG THIEF)
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Ella Anders Hue
GEAR: Benson Nathan Junior Reverb amp
GUITAR MOMENT: Every solo Adam Brisbin took on tour
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Buck Meek

SAMMY BOLLER
SONG: Animals As Leaders, "Monomyth"
ALBUM: Death Cab for Cutie, *Asphalt Meadows*
RIFF: Monuments, "Lavos"
SOLO: Julian Lage, "Tributary"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Wet Leg
GEAR: Two Notes Captor X
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen playing his dad's songs at the Taylor Hawkins tribute.
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Jeff Buckley, *Grace*
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Jake Kiszka

ANTONY GOMES
ALBUM: Steve Vai, *Inviolate*
RIFF: "Death of Me," Eric Gales
SOLO: Jeff Beck, "Isolation"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: The Cold Stares
GEAR: Morley Bad Horsie
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen performing classic Van Halen at the Taylor Hawkins memorial concert.
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Marcus King, *Young Blood*
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Jeff Beck

MARTY FRIEDMAN
SONG: Any of the latest Moon Tooth tunes
ALBUM: Deafheaven, *Infinite Granite*
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: PassCode, Suspended 4th, Unison Square Garden, Orbit Culture, Ado
GEAR: My rig gets simpler all the time. My sig guitar, sig pickups, sig amp and a Maxon AF-9 and I'm completely satisfied.
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): New Suspended 4th stuff and the album I've been working on.

JINXX (BLACK VEIL BRIDES)
SONG: Megadeth, "We'll Be Back"
ALBUM: Megadeth, *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!*
RIFF: Black Veil Brides, "Devil"
SOLO: Black Veil Brides, "Saviour II"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Marcin Patrzalek
GEAR: My B.C. Rich Warlocks
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen playing "Hot for Teacher" at the Taylor Hawkins tribute at Wembley.

TRAVIS STEVER (COHEED AND CAMBRIA)
SONG: Nate Bergman, "Highway Friend"
ALBUM: Nate Bergman, *Metaphysical Change*
RIFF: Polyphia, "Playing God"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Sheer Mag
GEAR: I got the Jason Isbell signature Tele. I can't wait to play it out and on recordings.
MOVIE: *Freak Scene*, a Dinosaur Jr. documentary
GUITAR MOMENT: The news of a new Spinal Tap film in the works.

JIMMY JAMES (DELVON LAMARR ORGAN TRIO)
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Khruangbin
GEAR: Templo Devices Nomad amp
GUITAR MOMENT: Playing a studio date for SconeCashPlayers on Daptone Records
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Truman Thomas, *Groovin'*
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Mark Speers of Khruangbin and Christone "Kingfish" Ingram

JUSTIN AUFDEMKAMPE (MISS MAY I)
SONG: Architects, "Deep Fake"
ALBUM: Fit for an Autopsy, *Oh What the Future Holds*
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Alpha Wolf
GUITAR MOMENT: The Rage Against the Machine tour. It's awesome to see how hyped it was!
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Architects, *For Those That Wish to Exist*

RICKY OLSON (MOTIONLESS IN WHITE)
SONG: Erra, "Snowblood"
ALBUM: Erra, *Deluxe*
RIFF: Dying Wish, "Cowards Feed, Cowards Bleed"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Static Dress
GEAR: Ibanez RG 652
GUITAR MOMENT: Nita Strauss playing with Demi Lovato
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Rammstein, *Zeit*

BOBBY KELLER
SONG: Megadeth's "Night Stalkers" has everything you could ask for in a guitar-centric song. Crushing riffs, ripping leads and classic thrash is what makes this one a standout to me.
ALBUM: Steve Vai's *Inviolate*
RIFF: Machine Head, "My Hands Are Empty"
SOLO: Kiko Loureiro's work on Megadeth's "We'll Be Back." When I heard it, I literally had one of those "WTF was that?" moments.
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Lorna Shore
GUITAR MOMENT: It's a tie between Polyphia collaborating with Steve Vai and Wolfgang sounding just like his dad at both Taylor Hawkins memorial shows.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Kiko Loureiro

TOSIN: TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES JACK: MAURICIO SANTANA/GETTY IMAGES

LOGAN RIVERA (GILLIAN CARTER)

SONG: "That's Physics, Baby" by Pool Kids. The guitars as well as the song are just super catchy. It's a certified banger for sure.
ALBUM: *It's Time... to Rise from the Grave* by Undeath
GEAR: These new guitar cabinets I just received from Emperor Cabs. They look great, sound great and smell like an Ethan Allan store.
GUITAR MOMENT: The Pantera reunion. That's a band I grew up listening to and I think it will be interesting to see live — also to see how many fights break out at the show.

SALLY GATES (TITAN TO TACHYONS)

SONG: "Danger in the Workplace" by Stickmen, featuring Tony Levin on Chapman stick and Markus Reuter on touch guitar
ALBUM: Mary Halvorson's Amaryllis/Belladonna box set
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Night Lunch
GEAR: I borrowed the Montreal Assembly Count to 5 pedal in 2022, and it quickly became a favorite. It's the craziest delay pedal I've ever used; it's a musical tool in itself.

BERNTH BRODTRÄGER

SONG: The Aristocrats, "Stupid 7" (with Primuz Chamber Orchestra)
ALBUM: Animals As Leaders, *Parrhesia*
GEAR: My signature KHDK Shred pedal
GUITAR MOMENT: Joining Tool on stage for a guest solo in Prague.

NICK JOHNSTON

SONG: Joe Satriani's "Sailing the Seas of Ganymede." Joe is still pushing boundaries within arrangement, production and creativity. There are so many great moments in this, especially going between the keyboard and guitar solo sections. Plus, it has such a cool drum arrangement!"
ALBUM: *Road to the Sun* by Pat Metheny
SOLO: "Sailing the Seas of Ganymede" again. The guitar solo is Satriani perfection. I would even link the keyboard solo in for bonus points.
GEAR: Quad Cortex from Neural DSP
GUITAR MOMENT: It was very cool to see that Porcupine Tree were touring again. Obviously Steven Wilson has been a big influence, and I just love Gavin Harrison's drumming. I was hoping to see them in Toronto but I just missed them!

ARIELLE

SONG: "Teeth of the Hydra," Steve Vai
ALBUM: Molly Tuttle, *Crooked Tree*
SOLO: "Patient Number 9" by Ozzy Osbourne with Jeff Beck
GUITAR MOMENT: The Taylor Hawkins concert was incredible, particularly Wolfgang Van Halen. So freakin' cool, even though the purpose of the concert was really sad.

NILI BROSH

ALBUM: *The Elephants of Mars,* Joe Satriani. It's been an amazing year for new music by the instrumental legends!
SOLO: Lari Basilio has done some crazy solos on her IG (as always); there have been many great moments for that this year!
GEAR: I'm biased on this one, but I designed a custom Ibanez RG with the L.A. custom shop this year, and couldn't be happier with it.
GUITAR MOMENT: The Rock in Rio lineup this past summer was incredible. I mean, Vai and Living Colour? Come on!

JAMES MONTEITH (TESSERACT, CAGE FIGHT)

SONG: "Iconic" by Obsidious. It's brutally heavy, hugely hooky — and Rafael Trujillo's [*guitar*] playing is outstanding.
ALBUM: *Solitaer* by the Hirsch Effekt. They're one of the most inventive of the new generation of prog/tech metal bands.
SOLO: "Enter the Flesh" by Heriot, who are one of the noisiest new bands around at the moment. The solo at the end of this track gives me the same harrowing feeling I felt when I first heard Kerry King play as a kid. It's raw, aggressive and dangerous.
GEAR: My new EVH 5050III
GUITAR MOMENT: Cynic announcing a reunion. Very excited for this!

STEVE STEVENS

SONG: "I Want My Crown," Eric Gales with Joe Bonamassa
ALBUM: *Fear of the Dawn,* Jack White
RIFF: "Degradation Rules" — Tony Iommi on Ozzy Osborne's *Patient Number 9*
SOLO: "Through the Flower" by Guthrie Govan (from *The Aristocrats with Primuz Chamber Orchestra)*
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Starcrawler
GEAR: Two Notes Torpedo Captor X
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen playing "Hot for Teacher" at the Taylor Hawkins tribute concert in London.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Mark Tremonti for putting his guitar aside and turning out mind-blowing versions of Sinatra tunes on *Mark Tremonti Sings Frank Sinatra* (all for charity). Then he released the fantastic Alter Bridge album, *Pawns & Kings*.

VICTORIA DE ANGELIS (MÅNESKIN)

SONG: "Bloomsday," Fontaines D.C.
ALBUM: *Unlimited Love*, Red Hot Chili Peppers
RIFF: Idles, "Crawl!"
SOLO: "Black Summer," Red Hot Chili Peppers [*transcribed on page 96*]
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Peaches
GEAR: Zvex Woolly Mammoth fuzz
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): *Comfort Me,* Amyl and the Sniffers
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Lee Kiernan

GRETCHEN MENN

SONG: "Midnight Walker," Jeff Beck
ALBUM: *INkBlot,* Daniele Gottardo
RIFF: "Spirals," Daniele Gottardo
SOLO: *Soundtrack Life,* Eric Johnson
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Florence Black
GEAR: Ernie Ball Music Man Sabre guitar
GUITAR MOMENT: Paul Gilbert's Great Guitar Escape camp
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Daniele Gottardo

SATCHEL (STEEL PANTHER)

SOLO: Can I pick my own solo? I can? OK, cool. I'm gonna pick "Let's Get High Tonight." It's just rad. Short, sweet, total conviction. I could pick someone else but I love myself more.
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Spyder, our new bassist. He also paints. I didn't know that until a few weeks ago. He sucks at it, but he's the only one I met this year.
GEAR: We have a new pedal coming out from

Khruangbin's Mark Speer [*left*] and Laura Lee in the U.K., June 24, 2022

Steel Panther laboratories in conjunction with NASA films and special effects. People are going to love it. It will literally transport you to 1987.
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Dio, *Holy Diver*. And the new Steel Panther record that you are gonna love.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Can I pick me? I'm gonna, cuz nobody else is. I have to advocate for myself.

REEVES GABRELS
SONG: "The Long Morrow," Big Scenic Nowhere
ALBUM: *Fear of the Dawn,* Jack White
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Patto
GEAR: MXR Deep Phase
GUITAR MOMENT: Steel Beans
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Greg McMullen (Lizzie and the Makers)

TYE TRUJILLO (OTTTO, STRANGER THINGS)
GEAR: Maxon OD808 overdrive. It adds that little amount of grit, which makes a huge difference.
GUITAR MOMENT: The Rage Against the Machine tour

MATTEO DI GIOIA (DESTRAGE)
SONG: The Fearless Flyers, "Vespa"
ALBUM: Jack White, "Fear of the Dawn"
RIFF: Porcupine Tree, "Rats Return"
SOLO: Ariel Posen, "Be Enough"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Melted Bodies
GEAR: Fractal FM9

RAFAEL TRUJILLO (OBSIDIOUS)
SONG: The title track from *Synergy* by Tim Miller
ALBUM: *Synergy* by Tim Miller. He was my teacher at Berklee; I'm a huge fan of his playing.
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Hadrien Feraud (one of my favorite bass players) started a new project called 5-Ish. I'm so excited to hear more from them.
GEAR: Quad Cortex from Neural DSP. It's an amazing thing and so versatile!
GUITAR MOMENT: Even if I wasn't there, I'm really happy that there is the Guitar Summit happening in Europe every year. It's like NAMM but smaller.

JB BRUBAKER (AUGUST BURNS RED)
SONG: "Gordian Naught," Animals As Leaders
ALBUM: Animals As Leaders, *Parrhesia*
RIFF: Jason Richardson, "Upside Down" (4:30 into the song)
SOLO: Polyphia, "Playing God"
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: The Natural Lines
GEAR: Fractal Audio FC12 foot controller
GUITAR MOMENT: Steve Vai introducing his Hydra guitar and Mercyful Fate's U.S. tour!
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Polyphia's Tim Henson

JUSTIN BENLOLO (BRKN LOVE)
SONG: "Taking Me Back," Jack White
ALBUM: *Fear of the Dawn*, Jack White
RIFF: "Honey Brains," Royal Blood
SOLO: Jeff Beck on Ozzy Osbourne's *Patient Number 9*
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Tigercub
GUITAR MOMENT: The Pantera reunion tour. I love that they're bringing Zakk Wylde out for it; he's really the only option and I'm really happy about it.

SADLER VADEN (SOLO, JASON ISBELL AND THE 400 UNIT)
SONG: "Grace," Marcus Mumford
ALBUM: *Earthling,* Eddie Vedder
RIFF: "Do You Wanna Dance?" by Coyle Girelli
SOLO: "Black Summer," John Frusciante
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Neal Francis
GEAR: Line 6 HX Stomp and my '63 SG Les Paul
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen ripping some Van Halen at the Taylor Hawkins tribute in London.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Billy Strings — I mean, come on!

ANGIE SWAN
SONG: Jack White, "Taking Me Back" (Tone!)
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Khruangbin
GUITAR MOMENT: The look Dave Grohl gave Shane Hawkins when he played drums at the Taylor Hawkins memorial concert in London as they played "Hero." I couldn't hold back the tears.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Mark Speer (of Khruangbin). His style, tone and approach to guitar is very unique.

JIM ADKINS (JIMMY EAT WORLD)
SONG: "Broken Eyes" by Plosivs
ALBUM: Plosivs' self-titled album
RIFF: "Thin Thing" by the Smile
SOLO: "War Above Los Angeles" by Off! This sort of crosses the line between riff and solo. The whole thing is sort of riff and solo at the same time — in the best way.
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Life Leone
GUITAR MOMENT: Seeing Jawbox play at Riot Fest
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: John Reis

SAMANTHA FISH
SONG: "What's the Trick?" by Jack White
ALBUM: *Fear of the Dawn,* Jack White. I could basically make this whole questionnaire about that record. He pushes the limits again and again, and succeeds. He is constantly redefining his sound. I think he's one of the most exciting guitarists out there.
SOLO: Eric Gales' "I Want My Crown" has an incendiary solo, and it features Joe Bonamassa. Win, win, win, win!
GEAR: I got a Fender Jazzmaster. I have had a couple Jaguars before and loved them, but I was looking for something similar with a little more grit. It does the job and then some.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: I'm late to the party and just discovered Tommy Emmanuel. See him live and he'll blow your mind.

LINDSAY ELL
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Red Herse
GEAR: Neural Quad Cortex
GUITAR MOMENT: James Gang reunion at the Taylor Hawkins tribute concert
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): *Wong's Cafe*, Cory Wong
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Derek Trucks

GHALIA VOLT
ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO MOST (NEW OR OLD): Magic Sam, *West Side Soul*
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Tab Benoit

PAT MCCRORY (TURNSTILE)
SONG: Fugitive, "Hell's Half Acre"
ALBUM: Fugitive, *Maniac*
RIFF: Steve Lacy, "Bad Habit"
SOLO: Red Hot Chili Peppers, "It's Only Natural"
GEAR: A custom American Ultra Strat
GUITAR MOMENT: Watching Ray Toro 10 years later.
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Nick Cogan

JIM WARD (SPARTA)
SONG: Alexisonfire, "Sweet Dreams of Otherness"
ALBUM: Anthony Green, *Boom. Done.*
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Love Spit Love
GEAR: Bowman Audio Endeavors Overdrive
GUITAR MOMENT: [*The announcement about*] Fender's Joe Strummer Telecaster.

JAKE CINNINGER (UMPHREY'S McGEE)
NEW BAND/GUITARIST: Lespecial
GEAR: Jackson Audio Cory Wong Optimist dual distortion pedal. It's the most lovable and versatile pedal ever; the EQ is extremely colorful.
GUITAR MOMENT: Wolfgang Van Halen playing "Hot for Teacher" at the Taylor Hawkins benefit concert. Wow, Wolfgang; your dad would be so freakin' proud!
GUITARIST OF THE YEAR: Julian Lage. He's the future of guitar. GW

JIM DYSON/GETTY IMAGES

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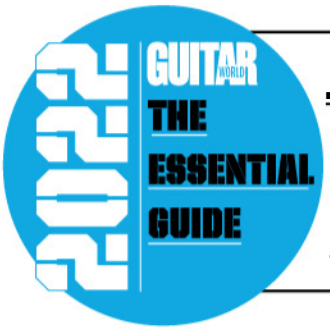
GUITARISTS OF THE YEAR

*No matter how you slice it, these **19** guitarists left their mark on 2022*



JOHN FRUSCIANTE

In a year filled with guitar news, perhaps nothing matched the impact of John Frusciante's long-awaited return to Red Hot Chili Peppers and their release of two albums: *Unlimited Love* and *Return of the Dream Canteen*. *Unlimited Love* became their first Number 1 album since 2006's *Stadium Arcadium* and took the band on their first U.S. stadium tour.

Compiled by **GUITAR WORLD STAFF** *Words by* **ALISON RICHTER**

Photo by **JONATHAN WEINER**

John Frusciante with his 1962 Fiesta Red Fender Jaguar

After 16 years away, Frusciante was ready to return, for personal and professional reasons. He told *Total Guitar*, "I really wanted that challenge of trying to work in a democratic band with people that I respect and people that I have a chemistry with.

"I felt that to move forward as a soul and as a human being, I had to accept that challenge. I felt that it would be good for me to try to work harmoniously with them, and not have my ego be the thing that was driving me forward, but to have love and respect for them. That was the thing: to try to be a part of a whole."

Equally inspiring, he said, is the opportunity to bring old and new material to life in front of fans. "It really does feel good to play the old songs again," he told *TG*. "There's been a magic feeling for all of us going back to that material. And, you know, I like improvising on stage. So I look forward to the jamming parts of it, and making up new solos every night.

"[*There's*] that reciprocal thing that happens with an audience, where their energy and the pressure of playing in front of them and not being able to rewind the tape and go backwards, it brings something out of you as a musician that there's no way to recreate as a guitar player sitting in a studio, recording your music by yourself, as I have in the past.

"I look forward to playing under that pressure, and letting go, and letting whatever spirits are with us that night come through me, and trying to match that feeling that gets generated between the band and an audience. You know, I haven't really played in front of an audience in about 12 years. So it's as new to me as writing rock music was when I rejoined."

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

A year and a half into its release, Wolfgang Van Halen's solo debut (and band), *Mammoth WVH*, shows no signs of slowing down. The album produced two Number 1 Active Rock singles, "Don't Back Down" and "Distance," which received a Best Rock Song Grammy nomination, and a "digital deluxe edition" was released in November. The momentum continued through U.S. tours, and — of course — when he made heads spin worldwide at two tribute concerts for Taylor Hawkins.

"It was a very powerful and unforgettable experience that I'll never forget," he says. "Just taking the performances on face value, I played with three musicians I've been idolizing my entire life. I saw

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> — *John Frusciante*

Josh Freese play with Nine Inch Nails many times. [*The Darkness'*] *Permission to Land*, with Justin Hawkins, was my favorite album in high school. Foo Fighters are the backbone of my musical interests. If you look at my album, of course Dave Grohl has inspired me. So just playing with those people — unforgettable. Then you add the context of why we are there, and everything that has happened in the past few years, and it's impossible to shake how powerful the moment was. Getting to know Shane, Taylor's son — what a wonderful kid and phenomenal drummer he is. It was an incredible thing to be part of, and I'm honored I was even asked to take part in it." For some bonus helpings of Wolfgang, head to pages 64 and 68.

NITA STRAUSS

When Nita Strauss announced she was taking leave from her longtime gig with Alice Cooper to join Demi Lovato, she never expected the ensuing kerfuffle over her career decision.

"I knew it was going to make waves, but I didn't know it would create a tsunami," she says. "I think the guitar community cares a lot about its own and wants to make sure the future of guitar-based music is safe and sound. I see that and I appreciate it. So, regardless of people's positive or negative opinions on the matter, I think it got guitar playing out in the forefront of the conversation, and that's what we want to do all along."

In addition to touring with Lovato, Strauss has been busy recording a new solo album, scheduled for early 2023 release. The project — recorded at her home studio and in Nashville — will be half instrumental and half with guest vocalists. She offered previews of both with "Dead Inside," a collaboration with Disturbed frontman David Draiman [*transcribed in our March 2022 issue*], and "Summer Storm," an instrumental. Not long before press time, she released "The Wolf You Feed," featuring Arch Enemy vocalist Alissa White-Gluz.

"I'm so proud of this album and so ready to get it out into the world," she says. "It's been a long process of creating these songs, and I'm looking forward to putting it out there, touring with my solo band and keeping on keeping on. I'm sure my year is going to be very full. I'm excited to keep playing, creating and touring." For more from Nita, head to page 66.

STEVE VAI

Steve Vai spent 2022 making headlines. First was the postponement of his U.S. tour due to mandatory surgery. Then came a summer video clip from Barcelona, where he handed his guitar to a teenage fan to play encore song "Fire Garden Suite IV — Taurus Bulba." His blistering contribution to Polyphia's "Ego Death" landed the three musicians cover interviews in *Guitar World*, no less.

Vai partnered with Ibanez for his latest signature PIA3761C guitar, and with DiMarzio for a set of Blue Powder UtoPIA pickups. He performed with Living Colour at Rock In Rio and with Yvette Young at his Vai Academy 6.0. He released a new album, *Inviolate*, and debuted the surreal, triple-neck, over-the-top bells-and-whistles Ibanez creation known as The Hydra.

Finally, there was the online release of *Steve Vai: His First 30 Years*, an authorized 75-minute documentary.

"As an artist, I try to relish the joy of marching forward with my creative intentions," Vai told *GW*. "I always want to go somewhere new. At the same time, the ego comes in and I want people to like it. It's like the two thoughts are in my head, and I'm always trying to reconcile them."

ERIC GALES

While he is no stranger to coverage from guitar media, many would argue that Eric Gales has never quite gotten his due on "best of" lists. Clearly that is changing, especially as he is doing more than turning heads with his guitar playing on his new album, *Crown*. Guitar players are certainly his core audience, but more than his mastery of the instrument, the message he's bringing is expanding his territory and reaching beyond musicians in the crowd.

"It's inspirational to watch actually, to see the tears come in people's eyes when I'm playing and singing these lyrics," Gales told *Guitarist*. "Predominantly, a lot of people come to the shows to see the guitar playing, but at the end of it they are moved by the things that I have to say. It's a one-two punch, doing everything that I can to try to help change the world."

JOE BONAMASSA

Joe Bonamassa is recognized by *GW*'s editors in 2022 for his own musical contributions and his ongoing efforts to champion other guitar players — Larry McCray, Joanne Shaw Taylor and Eric Gales among them. That's in addition to his Keeping the Blues Alive foundation, which doubles as a record label and 501 c(3) nonprofit organization that funds music education through numerous projects, resources, and scholarships, and helps musicians in need.

Bonamassa's latest album is *Time Clocks* [*2021*], which he calls his "New York record" in both location and theme. "Songwriting is the last frontier for me," he told *GW*. "You can do your best to recreate your favorite sounds, and recreate a vibe, but far more important is pushing yourself to write better songs. The more you push on the front part of the record, the more joyous it is to record the actual record itself."

ANDREW WATT

Andrew Watt's resume as a musician and producer reaches across all genres. Among his latest projects, he produced and appears on Ozzy Osbourne's latest album, *Patient Number 9*, and joined Osbourne onstage at the Los Angeles Rams NFL season opener performance in September. Earlier this year, Watt was on tour with Eddie Vedder, and he will produce the next Pearl Jam record. In fall, he partnered with Guitar Center for their "Greatest Guitar Sale on Earth," which featured him in television spots and video interviews.

"I'm constantly finding new people to work with who take how I play guitar and other instruments and put it all together in a new way and add a different kind of flair," Watt recently told *Guitar Player*. "For me, collaboration is key to evolution."

Two in one! A very duded-up Joe Bonamassa [*left*] and Eric Gales in Nashville in November 2021

JEFF FASANO

TOSIN ABASI

It had been six years since Animals As Leaders released *The Madness of Many*, but 2022's *Parrhesia* was worth the wait, as it overflows with the instrumental pyrotechnics and head-spinning guitar work that fans have come to expect.

"There's kind of an iconoclastic element to what we do that cuts against the grain, but it's true to us," Abasi told *GW*. "Considering the cultural discourse right now, there's so much being said, and I think just the idea of being centered on truth and being committed to that has always been a compass we've used to direct how we write music."

In addition to the new album, Abasi has been busy designing guitars. He collaborated with Ernie Ball Music Man on the seven-string Kaizen, which debuted at the 2022 NAMM show. Six-string aficionados can look forward to their version in the first quarter of the new year. Abasi Concepts, launched in 2019, made its presence known at NAMM with the Emi, an extended-range, double-cut model available in three different designs. In development is the nylon seven-string Larada, the latest in that series.

Earlier this year, Abasi joined Lzzy Hale, Gavin Rossdale, Bishop Briggs and Alice Cooper as judges of a new music reality television show, *No Cover*, where unsigned bands perform original songs while vying for a record deal.

DAVE GROHL

Dave Grohl's year can be summarized by pulling from a classic novel: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The best included the release of a Foo Fighters horror movie, *Studio 666*, and his long-awaited accompanying metal album under the banner Dream Widow, on which he handled vocals, guitar, bass, and drums.

There were other bests, of course. Grohl and Liam Gallagher on "Everything's Electric," from Gallagher's new solo album. Performing at Joe Walsh's VetsAid 2022 fundraiser for veterans. Joining Paul McCartney and Bruce Springsteen onstage at Glastonbury. Performing Seals & Crofts' hit "Summer Breeze" with Beck Greg Kurstin, Jack Black and Kyle Gass of Tenacious D, and actor John C. Reilly during Judd Apatow's Victims First LA show to benefit victims of mass casualty crime.

The worst, of course, was losing his longtime friend and bandmate Taylor Hawkins. Two memorial concert tributes featuring all-star lineups may be thought of as bests, in that they united colleagues and fans worldwide and offered hours of memories and music filled with exuberance, camaraderie, and stellar performances, where Grohl seemed to be everywhere at once. Still, it's impossible to watch even a short clip without experiencing the emotional undercurrent surrounding the events.

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>
> *— Jack White*

DAVE MUSTAINE

All that Dave Mustaine has endured during 40 years in the music industry — including substance abuse, band upheavals, a near career-ending arm injury, and a recent battle with cancer that required extensive chemotherapy and radiation treatments — is enough to undo the strongest of spirits.

Instead, he remains pragmatic, never self-pitying, guided by faith, family, and a passion to make loud, aggressive, honest music, as evidenced on Megadeth's latest album, *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* As he once remarked, "I have integrity and can sleep at night knowing I'm not a bullshit artist."

"I don't think I've ever wanted a record to be totally brutal," Mustaine told *GW* about the new release. "I don't think this record is all hateful. I think people that like this band will find it a fun listen."

JACK WHITE

Much can be said about Jack White's accomplishments as a guitarist and innovator. He first turned heads with the White Stripes, whom many regarded as a harkening back to punk ethos with a modern twist. With the Raconteurs he explored his roots, sometimes bringing in guests like bluegrass legend Ricky Skaggs to add mandolin while White played acoustic. His collection of guitars, from a 1964 Montgomery Ward Airline to his customized EVH Wolfgang, allows him to create the walls of sound that define his work, including his latest releases, the electric guitar charged *Fear of the Dawn* and acoustic-leaning release *Entering Heaven Alive*.

"I recently told somebody that, on this record, I'm probably the proudest I've been in my life of my guitar playing and performing," he told *GW*. "If someone asked me, 'What's a good example of your guitar playing?' I would give them *Fear of the Dawn* over anything else. There are places I've never gone before, and there are new techniques I thought I wasn't capable of doing. I think I was finally able to tap into 30 years of experimenting and failing, trying to get a certain tone and not really getting there."

JOE SATRIANI

Joe Satriani's 2022 album, *The Elephants of Mars*, was recorded at home, working remotely with his band and using a Sans-Amp plugin. The release was followed by a long-awaited tour. He also spent the year pursued by rumors of a Van Halen tribute tour, eventually confirming that talks had taken place before the idea was put on hold.

The Elephants of Mars opened new and unexpected creative doors for all involved. "This album was different because I was doing all the guitar at home," Satriani told *GW*. "It was a different kind of a record to put together logistically, and that really helped because there was no rush. We would send stuff to each other via email and we'd get stuff back without speaking to each other and we'd sit there and just listen to it, and it wouldn't be any on-the-spot judgment that was necessary.

"There were great accidents that happened along the way. And I have to say everybody maintained this level of spontaneity that you'd think would never happen if there was all this time and everybody was by themselves. But in fact, everyone kind of got the idea that they needed to record really spontaneous, interesting performances. And it was not about charting everything out the way that the arrangers or the artist demanded."

STEVE MORSE

The newer generation of guitar players might associate Steve Morse with Kansas and, most recently, Deep Purple, whom he joined in 1994 and from whom he retired this year due to personal/family reasons. Longtime fans, however, have followed his career for decades, dating all the way back to the Dixie Dregs.

Morse's diversity as a musician and composer earned him the title of Best Overall Guitarist in *Guitar Player* for five

consecutive years and a position in its Hall of Fame. "My style is what it is," he told *GP*, commenting on the Dixie Dregs' ongoing impact. "I'll go along for a few bars, but then I'll veer off into jazz guitar or classical. It kept us off the charts, but it won us fans who stayed with us."

SOPHIE LLOYD

London-based guitarist Sophie Lloyd is among the new school of guitarists who have proven that the Internet can become a path to success. The BIMM Institute honors graduate is closing in on two million subscribers who watch her versatile online performances and learn from her skills. Earlier this year, Lloyd landed a mega-gig with Machine Gun Kelly on his Mainstream Sellout tour.

An accomplished musician, songwriter, and performer, Lloyd is aware of the power of social media. "The internet is amazing," she told GuitarWorld.com. "It got me where I am today. I am a glorified bedroom player in a way. All of my videos have been online, and that is definitely where I have become well known in the guitar world. And I think that is really, really cool."

JIM ROOT

It was a busy year for Slipknot and lead guitarist Jim Root. A new album, a new signature Charvel — the Strat-style Jim Root Signature Pro-Mod San Dimas Style 1 HH FR — and new directions in songs and sounds. *The End, So Far* is a soundscape unlike their previous works, the product of lockdowns, mental health challenges, and uncertainty.

"Mostly, I helped shape and structure songs in the studio. But I didn't write and bring in stuff the way I did before," Root told *GW*. "Guitars were depressing me. Everything was depressing me. It's weird how the wires in your brain will cross up and whereas previously the guitar was an outlet for me to escape stuff, this time when I looked at it, it just reminded me of all the things that I wasn't able to do because of Covid. So, this positive force in my life turned into this negative thing, which would've been absolutely fucking horrifying if I hadn't been able to pull myself out of it.

"Now I pick up a guitar and I'm like, 'What would I do without this?' But back then, I was so far from that place. I was losing any sense of positivity. I had zero purpose at all. And I thought, 'What difference does it make if I'm here or if I'm not here? What good is my existence? I've pretty much accomplished everything in life that I've set out to accomplish. How do I set new goals and why should I bother?' That's what was going through my head and it was scary."

Slipknot's Jim Root — pick of the litter!

ANTHONY SCANGA/PROVIDED/PR

MATT BELLAMY

Muse guitarist Matt Bellamy had a busy year with the band's new album, *Will of the People*, their first since *Simulation Theory* in 2018. Described as addressing "the increasing uncertainty and instability in the world," Bellamy remarked about the new project, "A pandemic, new wars in Europe, massive protests and riots, an attempted insurrection, Western democracy wavering, rising authoritarianism, wildfires and natural disasters and the destabilization of the global order all informed *Will of the People*."

In addition to his work with Muse, Bellamy is a majority shareholder in Manson Guitar Works, a position he has held since 2019. This year, they announced two signature models, the MB and the DL, and a signature fuzz pedal.

"I'm in the process of developing a fuzz pedal that has a few features I've always made use of, all built into the pedal," Bellamy told *Total Guitar*. "It will have an EQ curve that you can slide from left to right or invert to create more of a scoop. I usually find most fuzz pedals to be a little bit too full-range. Especially in how they sit in relation to the bass, drums and vocals."

SLASH

If you've spent an hour watching network TV this year, you've probably had an overload of Slash "auditioning" in a Capital One ad that seems to air during every commercial break. If you're keeping up with Slash news, you also know he's been busy, as always, with a number of projects.

Foremost, perhaps, is the simply but aptly titled book *The Collection: Slash*, published by Gibson. As the name implies, it's a 300-page collection of interviews with the artist and photographs and illustrations of his guitars.

Earlier this year came the release of another simply but effectively titled album, *4*. Featuring Myles Kennedy & the Conspirators, accompanied by global livestreams and a virtual reality concert in partnership with Soundscape VR. There was, of course, a Guns N' Roses tour to keep him busy through the end of 2022. And we certainly cannot forget an afternoon spent guitar shopping at Norman's Rare Guitars in Tarzana, California, with *GW* for our April cover story.

Which brings us full circle to the man and the collection. "I don't buy guitars just to have guitars," he told *GW*. "It has to be something I'll actually use. I do have a couple guitars that are outside of my normal thing that you're used to seeing me with, but I find that they only interest me for a second, because they sound like 'that.' Whatever it is they are, that's what they sound like. Which is not really what I'm going for. I'm trying to sound like me. So I end up not buying anything too crazy."

POLYPHIA

An endorsement from Steve Vai is enough to confirm your credibility; a guest appearance on one of your new tracks ("Ego Death") removes all doubt. Polyphia — Tim Henson and Scott LePage — are in a league of their own with *Remember That You Will Die*. The pair launched the long-awaited project, their first in four years, with "Playing God," serving up a gumbo of sounds and giving a hip new vibe to nylon-string guitars.

"I wouldn't call what we do 'shred,'" Henson told *GW*. "It's more like 'a lot of notes.' You'll notice one or two motifs in each song, and then it expands to a lot of notes before going back to the main motif."

"I'm dancing around the word 'shred' myself," LePage added. "It wasn't in my head when we were making the record, but on certain songs I thought, 'What would any crazy guitar player do here?' It's not shred for the sake of playing a lot of notes; it's playing the right notes to com-

WOLFGANG'S MAMMOTH YEAR

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN PREVIEWS HIS NEXT ALBUM AND MAKES A STRONG CASE FOR HIS OWN SELECTION FOR GUITARIST OF THE YEAR

FOLLOWING A REMARKABLE run with the release of his debut solo album, *Mammoth WVH*, Wolfgang Van Halen is back in the studio with producer Michael "Elvis" Baskette. Their plan is to finish the new Mammoth album in January and mix it in February, wrapping up in time for Van Halen and his band to begin a U.S. tour with Alter Bridge in March. "We have some fun things planned throughout the year that are still in their infancy," he says. "It's looking like we're not slowing down. The machine is waking up again."

Van Halen and Baskette were in the early stages of tracking when he learned he was one of *GW*'s Guitarists of the Year. During a quick break from recording sessions, he connected with the magazine to discuss this and more.

Congratulations on being chosen as one of the Guitarists of the Year. Is "unexpected" an accurate word to describe your reaction when you heard the news?
Are you kidding me? What an honor, seriously! Thank you. I'm not a guitarist of the year. I'm just a dude. What an insane honor.

Was it a little bit of a *Field of Dreams* moment? Beautiful yet bittersweet?
Absolutely. I know Dad would be superstoked. I don't know how many times Dad was on the cover, maybe more than anyone else. I wouldn't be surprised if that were actually true. So it's a trip to be recognized by that same magazine — as myself.

Who is your choice as Guitarist of the Year? Is this a given, or no?
It's a funny thing. When people ask me who my number ones are in any respective thing, I don't even think about Dad or Al [*Alex Van Halen*] in guitar or drums because it's such a given. They're beyond rating numbers of who's my favorite, because they're a part of me. They would be the easy answer, and I think that would be doing a disservice to the many amazing people who are out there now writing incredible music.

I'd like to point out one of my favorite guitar players currently. His name is Aaron Marshall and he has a band called Intervals. Their most recent album is called *Circadian*, and came out in 2020. He is one of my favorite guitar players. On top of that, he's a wonderful man, a very kind dude. I feel like I have become a better guitar player because I've tried to learn all the songs on that album. He has such a wonderful melodic sensibility that is so different from people in his genre of the heavier, progressive, metal-y rock sort of thing. It really separates him from everyone else. I can't speak enough of how wonderful a guitar player and songwriter he is.

Who were you when you began working on the first Mammoth album and who are you now?
I'm a very different person. The person who made the album started working on it way back in 2015, and that Wolfie has been through a lot of shit to become the Wolfie I am today, especially in the last three years. The things I experienced have certainly changed the way I look at life and the way I operate, and I'm sure in many ways that I don't even realize. It's weird to be in my 30s. I've been through all kinds of stuff since the start of that record and now, so it feels exciting, bittersweet, and all kinds of emotions at once as I get ready to record this next album.

What are your goals for the new album?
It sucks to know that Dad isn't going to be popping in every now and then like he did the first time. So it's going to be different, but the goal overall is the same, which is to make music I would like to hear and that I enjoy. That's how I follow my writing process.

The main goal is to widen the breadth of what the output can be. I like to view it as this sort of cone, if you will, where the left side is the softer songs, the right side is the heavier songs, and everything in between is scaled properly. Songs on the left would be like "Distance" and "Think It Over," and on the right would be something like "Stone," "You're to Blame" and "Don't Back Down." The desire I have with this new album is to go further and beyond on both sides.

You've navigated the peaks and valleys of being a public figure since you were a teen. With that comes the pressure of upholding the family name, which you do with talent and class, bullying from internet trolls, whom you handle with grace, and grieving publicly in a world that is not always kind to the bereaved. First, how is your mental health in all of this? Second, do you have words for readers who are dealing with similar situations and may find comfort through your shared experiences?
I won't lie. I don't think my emotional and mental wellbeing have been any lower. It's a thing that is incredibly tough to fight. In the absence of Dad, and everything that has happened, it's very difficult. The lucky thing is I have a wonderful support system surrounding me. I have my mother, my uncle Patrick, my fiancée Andraia, so many wonderful people I can lean toward, because I certainly don't have the emotional strength. There's many times when I don't have the strength to do anything, and more than not, that seems to be the case. But you've got to find the things that give you life. For me, that's music and being able to wake up every day and think about how I'm going to create this second album. It's stressful, but it's also very exciting, and it's what I put all my thinking into.

When it comes to dickheads on the Internet, that's always there. Everyone deals with it. Sure, it hurts a lot when it's directed toward you, but you've got to realize the place it's coming from. I like to pick my battles. I like to find the right time to chirp and say something funny, but sometimes you do feel that need to be like, "Fuck off." And you can do that every now and then. But all in all, it says so much more about them than it does about you that they go out of their way. You can point them out, too, because you'll see their profile and you can almost always predict what's going to be filling their timeline.

When it comes to people who feel the same way I do, dealing with depression and anxiety, you never really are alone. Unfortunately, it's like we're all alone together, because so many of us feel this way.

I work through a lot of it through music, and I have a lot to work through this time around. I'm cautiously optimistic and also dreading it at the same time, because I have to go to a lot of places emotionally and mentally to get to the other side of this album and have a finished, complete thing. But I think it will be good for me because that's the same thing that happened with the first album. It was a very therapeutic, cathartic experience. GW

ANDRAIA ALLSOP

Words by **ALISON RICHTER**

Wolfgang Van Halen with the new EVH SA126. Intrigued? Check out Chris Gill's "The Born Legacy" starting on page 68

"IT SUCKS TO KNOW THAT DAD ISN'T GOING TO BE POPPING IN EVERY NOW AND THEN LIKE HE DID THE FIRST TIME"

— Wolfgang Van Halen

THE QUEST

SURE, **NITA STRAUSS** MADE THE VERY PUBLIC SHIFT FROM ALICE COOPER'S BAND TO DEMI LOVATO'S BAND, BUT SHE'S SO MUCH MORE THAN "SOMEONE ELSE'S GUITAR PLAYER"

TYPE NITA STRAUSS' name into a search engine and you'll find endless links about her longtime gig with Alice Cooper and new post with Demi Lovato. But Strauss is much more than a side person. She's a songwriter, session musician, clinician and solo artist with a unique array of credits ranging from movie soundtracks to the WWE.

Strauss joined Cooper's touring ensemble in 2014. After eight years, it seemed like the ideal setting to showcase her loud and proud technique. Instead, she stunned fans earlier this year by accepting the Lovato gig. While this announcement dominated headlines (and earned her a spot among our top headlines of 2022), no less significant is news of her long-awaited second solo album, scheduled for release in 2023.

The focus is often on your work with other artists and not as much on your solo career. With a new album coming up, how do you redirect the attention, and is it frustrating to have to do so?

It doesn't bother me too much, because playing with other artists has been the majority of my career. It also speaks to one of the main reasons I thought it was necessary to take a step out and make a change in my day job, so to speak. I want to be myself. I want to have my own identity and my own brand. I do have my solo music and a new album in the works, and if I'm just known as one person's guitar player for the rest of my life, that counteracts what I'm trying to do. So I think all I can really do is keep touring my solo band when I'm off the road with other artists, keep releasing new music, and at the end of the day, if I'm in the conversation, I'm happy.

What does "being someone's guitar player" require?

Playing with the artists that I do, I'm not technically a band member. Being a hired gun, it's really "step in and fill this role," whether it's playing Alice Cooper songs or reimagining rockers from Demi Lovato songs. What I bring to each of those different gigs is that sense of professionalism I've learned across so many years, and how to step into each role, fill it nicely and tightly, and help bring that artist's vision to life while still bringing my own personality and energy to the show.

I have learned so much from Alice and Demi. One of the things they both do really well is they take the forefront, but they give each band member an introduction and time to shine. They don't take the entire spotlight for themselves. That's something I try to do with my solo band as well, to make sure it's a collaborative effort and everybody knows it.

What can you tell us about your new album?

I'm a really emotional musician and person, and I write about what I'm feeling and what's going on in my life. Making this album, and especially doing a lot of the writing during 2020, when everything was shut down and uncertain, brought out a lot of emotion in my songwriting. I've grown a lot as an artist and songwriter since *Controlled Chaos* came out in 2018, and I'm excited to show a higher level of playing and more depth and maturity in these new songs. I've improved a lot as a musician, my technique has gotten better in the last four years, and I've gotten more comfortable in my own style, so I feel I've come into my own as a guitar player.

How does working on other artists' material strengthen your chops?

First of all, anytime you're playing guitar, you're improving, no matter what it is. Whether you're playing power chords or technical metal, if you're playing guitar, you're getting incrementally better each day. Playing straightforward rock songs has given me a much better sensibility of song structure, and not playing too much, or adding too much, and all these things guitar players do just because we like to show off and have fun! It has taught me a lot about letting the song breathe.

Simplicity is key in a lot of Demi's songs, especially the older ones, which were originally pretty straightforward pop songs that have been reimagined in this heavy-rock way. The simple, catchy chords are still there, and it's finding things that work around the melodies, because melody is king in pop and rock songs. It's about finding that simplicity and embracing it, rather than saying, "This is only four chords. I have to play a bunch of notes over it."

You have signature models with Ibanez. What makes their guitars right for you?

Like so many guitar players, every time I got a new guitar, there was always something that wasn't quite perfect. "I love it so much, but I have to put different pickups in it" or "I love it so much, but if only it had an ebony fretboard." If only it was this, if only it was that. When I had the chance to design the JIVA with Ibanez, I already had all my dream specs in my head because I'd had so many different guitars. I knew I wanted a mahogany body, a quilted maple top and an ebony fretboard. I knew what I wanted the pickups to sound like.

I wanted a guitar that screamed "me," and that's what we got with the original JIVA 10 with the black-to-blond burst. We expanded to the JIVA JR, which I call the "beach burst" because it goes from black to blue to blond. Now we have the JIVA 10L and two JIVA X2 models — the original black one and the new JIVA X Ghost, which is the white one I use onstage. It's my favorite guitar.

I only play my signature guitars, not just because I designed them, but because I feel I designed the perfect guitar for my playing style. It's fast, it's light, it's versatile. It can shred, it can go clean, it can go rhythm. So that's my weapon of choice 100 percent of the time.

Is instrumental music more challenging in terms of communication, since there are no lyrics, or is it more universal, in that it's open to interpretation and the listener can simply let the music take them wherever it leads?

For me, writing music for a vocalist is infinitely more challenging. I come from the world of instrumental music, where you can play what you're feeling, evoke those emotions through note choices and chord choices, and there's no limit to it. When you get vocals involved, you're thinking about the singer and their range, how many syllables you can fit in this line without it sounding weird, and does the end of this phrase rhyme with the end of the phrase after it. There are so many rules you have to follow in order to make a catchy radio song, let's say. So I find it a lot more limiting to write music for a vocalist. At the same time, it's a great challenge, it's a fun challenge, it's one I've embraced a lot, and while it might not be as subjective as instrumental guitar music, I think it's definitely its own beast. GW

ANA MASSARD

Words by **ALISON RICHTER**

"I WANT TO BE MYSELF. I WANT TO HAVE MY OWN IDENTITY AND MY OWN BRAND"

— Nita Strauss

Nita Strauss with her signature Ibanez JIVA X2 Ghost

THE BORN LEGACY

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN AND MATT BRUCK DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE EVH BRAND AND THEIR DEDICATION TO KEEPING EDDIE VAN HALEN'S VISIONARY IDEAS ALIVE

By **CHRIS GILL** *Photo by* **ANDRAIA ALLSOP**

SHORTLY AFTER GUITARISTS got over the initial shock of Edward Van Halen's passing on October 6, 2020, many wondered what would become of the EVH brand, which had been the guitar legend's primary avenue of creative expression ever since the inception of EVH in 2004. The guitars and amps produced by EVH were truly the products of Ed's imagination, innovation and drive for perfection. Many feared that without Ed, the EVH brand would cease to exist.

"WE KNOW WHAT FANS WOULD WANT BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE WOULD WANT"

— Wolfgang Van Halen

Matt Bruck [*left*] and Wolfgang Van Halen worked with Eddie Van Halen on a daily basis, and no one knew more about his preferences, ideas and standards of excellence

The announcement that EVH would continue under the leadership of Ed's son Wolfgang alongside his partner in the brand, Matt Bruck — who played an instrumental role in EVH's success from its very beginning — was a relief to those who had closely followed the company's progress. Wolfgang and Bruck worked with Ed on a daily basis, and no one knew more about the guitarist's preferences, ideas and standards of excellence or were as faithful to maintaining his vision. The highly dedicated and talented team that supported Ed and Bruck at EVH also remained intact. Equally importantly, before Ed passed he laid out a long-term plan to ensure that his vision would live on for many decades to come.

"Ed left a lot of ideas for us to develop," Bruck says. "We are committed to delivering all of them. We worked with Ed for a very long time, and we know what he would want. Ed indeed lives on through his music and the brand, which lives in all of us now, and it's up to us. It's also up to every fan — everybody who is involved and appreciates it. We all are the flame now. I don't see EVH or Ed's legacy diminishing."

OVER THE LAST two years since Ed's passing, EVH has continued to thrive and grow. Core products like the Wolfgang guitars, 5150 III amplifiers and Striped Series guitars have become timeless modern classics, while new products like the 5150 Iconic series amps and 5150 guitars have helped EVH build a following with a new generation of players. Wolf Van Halen's band, Mammoth WVH, has also given fans a sneak peek at upcoming EVH products like the SA126 semi-hollow electric (with the "126" paying tribute to his dad's birthdate) and EVH Wolfgang basses, which are currently going through road testing just like Ed did with his signature gear.

Just a few days after Wolf's exhilarating performance for the Taylor Hawkins Tribute concert at London's Wembley Stadium, Wolf and Matt Bruck talked with us about what lies ahead for the EVH brand.

Collectively, the two of you had almost 60 years of experience of working with Ed. Matt, you started working with Ed as his guitar tech in 1990 and were his business partner at the EVH brand from the very beginning in 2004. Wolf, ever since you were a child you were absorbing your dad's knowledge and thoughts just by being around him on a daily basis. And then you played in the band with him for more than 15 years, in addition to your own experience developing personal instruments with Chip Ellis for the Van Halen tours.

MATT BRUCK: We're in a unique position, with me having worked side-by-side with Ed for 30 years, and Wolf being his son and having worked with him professionally since he was 15.

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN: Matt is a little too humble. I don't know if people are aware of just how important and integral Matt has been to the company since its inception. He was always there with my dad, working with him, half-and-half the whole time collaborating and helping make everything fucking work. If Matt won't tell you how important he is, I will. That's why the brand is still doing as well as it is, in continuation of my dad's vision, and how we see things moving forward. We're here to preserve that legacy and keep it going as well as it's always been and more.

BRUCK: I don't play my position for any other reason than making sure we stay authentic. I ran every play with Ed for 30 years. When we work on things now, I swear to God that Ed is still right next to me. A lot of time I think to myself, what would Ed think? — and the answer is always pretty instant. It comes from having worked with him as much and for as long as I did. My goal is always to make it right, make it so Ed would go, Fuck yeah! It's as simple as that. That's the watermark.

But EVH is more than just us. It's also the team at FMIC we have working with us. We're so fucking lucky because everybody is super talented and takes the job very seriously. [*Senior Project Engineer and Master Builder*] Chip Ellis knows. [*VP Category Management*] Jon Romanowski knows. [*EVH Product development manager*] Matt Brown knows. [*EVH principal amp design engineer*] James Brown knows. When they give us something or we give them something, we all know the EVH ethos and stick to it. We're a family.

VAN HALEN: That's the thing. There's so much love and dedication behind everything we do. We know what Pop wanted because he told us what he wanted.

BRUCK: We know that at the end of everything it falls into the players of EVH. We want them to say, "Man, this is what I expected from EVH."

VAN HALEN: No matter how close we all are, we're all fans as well. We know what fans would want because that's what we would want.

BRUCK: That's what we focus on, being true to the cornerstones and ethos that made Ed who he was and how he went about things.

VAN HALEN: We always look at things like a bullet-pointed list. The top-tier item is, "Is this authentic to Dad's legacy and what he strived for?"

BRUCK: And we know when he'd be happy with something or not. The other thing is our devotion to giving everything our all. There is no one in the EVH ecosystem who says, "Yeah, I did good enough." It's always about challenging ourselves. If you do that, you do right by the group and by Ed's legacy. We have the big picture in our heads, but mostly we focus on the task at hand every day, make our very best efforts to get through that and move on to the next task.

Wolf, a while back you gave a sneak peek at the SA126 semi-hollow electric and the new Wolfgang bass model, both of which are being road-tested with your band Mammoth WVH. Are those the next instruments we're going to see from EVH?

BRUCK: The immediate things you're going to see are the 78 Striped Series Relic and the MIJ (Made in Japan) Fujigen EVH Signature models. There's a lot in the queue. The SA126 is still a work in progress. Wolf is like his father in that he liked something that was classic but wanted a higher level of performance from it.

Wolf used a 335 until we were able to put the SA126 together. The concept was to create a hybrid guitar that had a classic foundation fused with high performance features that players today are used to from EVH. Any time you take something from one guitar and fuse it with something from another guitar, you get something new. Credit to Wolf, I was there for his performance at the Taylor Hawkins Tribute concert in London, and I never heard a semi-hollow guitar sound like that before in my life. That was our entire idea and goal.

VAN HALEN: A lot of people thought I was playing Dad's Wolfgang relic guitar from the 2015 tour.

BRUCK: The worn finish is fashioned after that guitar. This guitar would not have existed without Wolf, and it was an intense collaboration between Chip Ellis, who has built guitars for EVH for almost 20 years, myself and Wolf. We're not done with it. Ed always had what he called the crash testing phase.

VAN HALEN: One part of the process has already been road tested. We worked with Tim Shaw and Chip Ellis on the pickups, and I think we've landed on something

"ED LEFT A LOT OF IDEAS FOR US TO DEVELOP. WE ARE COMMITTED TO DELIVERING ALL OF THEM"
— Matt Bruck

Bruck and Van Halen with an EVH 5150III 100S head and the new SA126 semi-hollow electric

ANDRAIA ALLSOP

perfect.

BRUCK: They're not the first edition of pickups that the guitar came with.

VAN HALEN: I toured with the guitar starting in January. The original pickups mirrored the heat of a classic 335.

BRUCK: It was like a traditional PAF humbucker wind.

VAN HALEN: We boosted the output a bit. When I was playing it at home after the tour I noticed that I had to kick it into the red channel on the 5150 III amp to get the dirt that I really wanted for a solo. The pickups through the blue channel just felt lacking. I almost felt bad about it, so I called Matt up and said, "Hey, can we work on the pickups?"

BRUCK: I was like, "Yeah! that's what crash testing is all about."

VAN HALEN: So I was like, "Great. I'd love to see how much more we could squeeze out of this."

BRUCK: That's very much the same dynamic I had with Ed. We would kick out a prototype and he'd sit with it so he could form an opinion. Usually, he would want to push for something because the guitar didn't quite have all he wanted. I let Wolf know that was what this period of time was all about. How lucky are we? Our team is amazing. Between Chip Ellis and Tim Shaw and the rest of the team there is a dedicated collective effort to bring about the result. I've never heard a guitar that sounds like the SA126, and that was our goal. It's Wolf's unique instrument.

VAN HALEN: It was exciting how we finally landed where we did. We had the original pickups, the ones I wanted that were a little bit hotter, and ones that were extra hot. That middle hotness was where we found the perfect balance. It has clarity along with that dirt that you'd never expect from a semi-hollow. The hottest pickups lost that definition and got fuzzy and boomy in a not-too-nice way. It was very much like what Dad would do, "Give me too much and then we'll dial it back." It's amazing how great that guitar sounded at Wembley through just a stock EVH 5150 III 6L6 50-watt head, and I was playing on just the blue channel the whole time. I didn't need to pump it up on the red channel for the solo. I think that was so fucking awesome.

BRUCK: The clean tones on "Hot for Teacher" were the neck pickup with the volume dialed down.

VAN HALEN: The volume for the neck pickup was at 3 or 4. I just flipped between the bridge and the neck pickup, because that's how Dad played it on the *1984* album with the Flying V.

COURTESY OF WOLFGANG VAN HALEN (ABOVE LEFT) FMIC/EVH (ABOVE RIGHT AND GUITARS)

The neck on the SA126 also has a 24.75-inch scale length, like the Flying V.

BRUCK: The profile on that neck is like, shredder. It's real fast.

VAN HALEN: You can't find any semi-hollow guitar on the market that has a neck like that.

BRUCK: Most semi-hollow guitars have necks that are like a baseball bat. We used some '78 and '79 EVH necks as a reference.

VAN HALEN: Didn't we use the Bumblebee neck as a starting profile?

BRUCK: We put everything down on a table, and Wolf chose aspects of several necks that he liked.

VAN HALEN: It was like, "How wide and thin can we go?" [*Laughs*]

BRUCK: Once Chip rendered the neck, Wolf said, "Can you take a little more off?" There was still some hand-sanding going on the day before Mammoth left on tour. Chip had the necks out on a table on the driveway at 5150, and he was sanding them down. It's so much the way things have always been done around here.

VAN HALEN: Chip is really the one who makes the guitar world go around at EVH. I cannot stress enough how important Chip Ellis is to the process.

BRUCK: Chip is to the guitars what James Brown is to the amps. And we wouldn't be the same without Jon Romanowski and Matt Brown and the support we get from FMIC executive management. EVH is much more than a typical brand. Most brands aren't the fruit of this genius innovator that had enough substance and innovation to warrant a brand. It's a special blessing beyond words because it is Ed's baby and because of the people involved. Wolf and I will do anything to defend the integrity, authenticity, quality, innovation and everything anyone has come to know and appreciate about this brand. We are hell-bent on maintaining that. It's our duty to be faithful custodians of EVH.

VAN HALEN: It's much more than defending and preserving EVH. It's also our duty to push things even further, to cement a legacy that's already been cemented 15 times over.

BRUCK: ... and grow it with new ideas, like what we're doing with the SA126. Ed also left a lot of ideas, and we would be remiss to not bring them to fruition for everyone to enjoy, but we can't do them all at one time.

The process with the SA126 is so reflective of what happened with the EVH Wolfgang. That took a while too — it was road-tested and the pickup development took a long time.

VAN HALEN: I think Dad would love the SA126. Some people say, "Ed would never play shit like that," but we all know where he got the pickup from for the original Frankenstein.

Exactly, from his early Sixties ES-335. And he used a 335 to record his solos for "And the Cradle Will Rock..." and "Big Fat Money." People have no idea how wide a range of instruments Ed used, particularly in the studio.

BRUCK: He also loved bass instruments, whether they were baritones or basses. There were two songs [*"Good Enough" and the unreleased track "I Want Some Action," recorded for* 5150] where he put a .060- or .058-gauge string on the low E and tuned it down because it needed that low end for the riff, but he also needed the other five regular strings for playing chords and solos. I'd ask him, "What's the tuning on that?" and he'd go, "I don't know."

For half of the first Van Halen album, Ed used a guitar that didn't have a tremolo. There's a huge place for stop-tail guitars. More people play stop-tails than guitars with locking tremolos. We dig both and we want to show people what we can come up with.

With Ed, there were never any rules. He'd have a sound in his head and he'd do whatever it took to make it work. As a

[*from left*] Little guitars: A young Wolfgang spends quality time with his father; Ed amid his beloved EVH gear, circa 2016; the company's new 78 Striped Series Relic and MIJ (Made in Japan) Fujigen EVH Signature models; Ed in action in 1978 with his original homemade Frankenstein guitar

MARK DOBKOWSKI (ABOVE RIGHT)

result he had this encyclopedic collection of all these wacked-out, crazy experimental guitars that he modified or built. He was in perpetual motion. The EVH brand has to reflect that to maintain authenticity. We're always willing to take on a challenge or something new and figure out a way to do it. That is how you made Ed happy.

The SA126 is a great next logical step for the company. It fits in with the company's progression, and it's a little bit different.

VAN HALEN: Yeah, it's something that hasn't been offered before, but now it will. It's another door opening.

BRUCK: We're also stoked about the 78 Striped Series Relic. We put a lot of time into that. There's a video that's going to be coming courtesy of Chip that's all about how Ed strung that guitar. Ed had this whole process of stringing the guitar so the non-locking trem would stay in tune even after doing radical dive bombs. You have to keep the string from twisting, wind up on some of the tuning pegs instead of down, oil the brass nut . . .

VAN HALEN: And what he did might not work for somebody else, but if you want that it's important to show people how he did it, so they can do it.

BRUCK: We have that information, and we want to share that "inside" stuff with the world.

Tell us more about the Fujigen guitars.

BRUCK: The Fujigen factory in Japan, which is now also Fender Japan, will be making MIJ Series EVH Signature models, including his signature Stealth and a tribute to the 2015 tour white relic, which will have a white finish but will not be relic'd. We will also continue to make the USA models in Corona, California, but the Fujigen guitars are next in the queue.

Ed's history with Japanese guitars predates Van Halen's records. He played a bolt-on Flying V and an Ibanez Destroyer during the club days, which were both built by Fujigen. People also don't know that Ed did a lot of experiments on Japanese Strats before and after the first record. We're super excited to do something with Fujigen and for the Japanese market. People in America and around the world will be able to access those models too.

VAN HALEN: They rip.

BRUCK: And then there's a whole bunch of other very cool stuff down the road. We have a three-year plan that's always in play. Not everything is cemented. Things sometimes have to get moved around, but any project that gets delayed is always brought back when the time is right. While we've talked mostly about stringed instruments, we're equally as focused on the tube amplification side of things.

How involved was Ed with the new 5150 Iconic series amps?

BRUCK: Ed was involved and created the foundation of that amplifier and gave it to James and the team to develop. Again, go back to our ecosystem and human resources. James Brown was the original engineer on the very first 5150 amp. How lucky are we that we have him onboard? We went after James and recruited him after our principal amp engineer How-

ard Kaplan decided to retire. James is now apprenticing Alexander Shibilski, so we also have a new generation coming up behind James on principal engineering for our amplifiers.

The 5150 Iconic series offer very good value for the price.

BRUCK: Ed never grew up with a lot of money. He never had money for pedals, which is why he focused on getting his sound out of the amp. Because of that, we wanted to offer an amp that was more within people's reach without sacrificing the tone or quality. Ed started it and grew it, and we finished it. Ed had other things to focus on in the final lap. I remember A/B'ing the 5150 Iconic against every other 5150 amp that we had ever put out, and in my view it was able to hang with everything respectably, which was the goal. I'm incredibly proud of it and the combos that are going to be available for Iconic. Even if you don't have a lot of money you'll be able to afford a combo that just smokes. Releasing the Iconic was a real moment. We hoped that people would like it, and we feel good about the way it's been received.

Ed's original Kramer 5150 guitar that he played in the Eighties is immensely popular. How close are we to finally seeing a replica of it?

BRUCK: It's part of a conversation. It's one of the most important guitars that's ever graced rock and roll. But then again there are a lot of Ed's other guitars that we would like to do. For one, I'm a huge fan of the Star body. The 40th anniversary of that guitar was in 2020. The 40th anniversary of the Circles guitar was in 2021. This year is the 40th anniversary of the Kramer. To the best of my knowledge, and people may split hairs with me, Ed made that guitar in 1982.

But to answer your question, it's in the queue. We just can't do everything all at one time. The replicas are special. We have never thought, "Nah, we don't need to do that." There are also some really cool things going on in the 5150 Series of guitars that Wolf has suggested.

VAN HALEN: I really do like the 5150 Series guitars. It's one thing to do a replica, and it's cool to play a guitar that looks like the ones my pop played, but there's also something really special to me about being able to reflect yourself in the instrument. The non-striped issues of those guitars are a really exciting proposition.

BRUCK: Wolf is a shredder who listens to a lot of the new breed players, and he thought it would be cool if we offered 24-fret models with stop-tails and locking trems. There's a whole new generation of players who are really into 24-fret guitars. We just got our first prototypes of the 24-fret 5150 Series guitars. And once again, they still need to go through development and a little bit of refinement, but they're very cool!

VAN HALEN: Primarily, I'm not a locking trem guy.

BRUCK: ... So there will be hardtail versions of those guitars, too. We want to embrace old and new ideas alike and do them all well. We want to provide people with quality instruments that sound great to let them find their own inspiration and express themselves with good musical tools.

The biggest thing to me that distinguishes EVH products from other legacy products is that the guitars and amps are for everybody, not just someone playing in a Van Halen cover band.

BRUCK: It's cool if you're in a Van Halen band, because you can get that sound right away using EVH gear. But it's also cool to see what people are doing with the gear that is not Van Halen-esque and is their own thing.

VAN HALEN: You can take everything that Dad worked with through his entire career and make it your own.

BRUCK: It's like, look at what Meshuggah does with EVH gear. That's killer! Does that sound like Van Halen? I don't think so. Or what about what Kurt Alison with Jason Aldean or what Jack White does with it? Or what Scott Ian does with 5150s. That's really cool.

VAN HALEN: Our buddy Paul Sidoti who plays for Taylor Swift is playing Wolfgangs and 5150s. Everybody can find use with EVH gear. It's not made just so you can play "I'm the One" and have it sound right, although you could do that if you want. [*Laughs*]

Who are some of the key players at EVH?

BRUCK: Jon Romanowski and Matt Brown. They are huge fans, they're smart, super talented, hard workers, experienced, committed and good guitar players! Along with them, Chip, James and now Alexander Shibilski, who is coming up as the apprentice to James, are the main people. Howard Kaplan is now retired, but he was one of those guys as well, and we still consult him all of the time. Mike Ulrich and Brian McLeskey were key, worked with Howard and were involved with the development of the 5150 III amps at the outset, which have magical circuits. Along with Wolf and myself, that's the core team. Mike Tempesta in Artist Relations and Richard Bussey in Accessories do a really great job. We also get great support from Justin Norvell and Max Gutnik in executive management. It's made all the difference in the brand's success. And credit to Jeff Cary too, who was pivotal in building the core team from the start.

We are all super tight, and we talk constantly for all kinds of reasons. Ed was always a stickler for communication. He thought it was so important to be connected and communicate and not take anything for granted. Anybody who ever worked for him, their hearts got invested. It's the same with Wolf's organization. If you work for a Van Halen, your heart gets involved and your dedication follows. We would not be who we are without the sum of our parts.

The brand is so special because of the people who make it up and the guy who is responsible for its existence. Chip and James are pillars. They cannot be duplicated. They each have 20 and 30 years, respectively, of experience working with us and know exactly what makes us tick. We're kind of like this homemade, backyard shop to the nth power, but we exist within Fender. Fender's manufacturing capabilities are insane! I'm so proud of the quality of our products and the integrity of our circuits and our build quality.

We were with a previous company, and there were problems with setups and guitars staying in tune. Ed was an advocate for his customers, and he said that if you set up a guitar correctly it should stay in tune. He said that even the cheapest guitar could play as good as the most expensive guitar if it was set up right. To show them, he took a guitar and stretched the strings out and did all of the little things that he did when he restrung a guitar. When he was done he threw it across the boardroom, picked it up and played it and said, "See. It's fucking in tune!"

Fender has always respected that by taking the time and doing setups the way they're supposed to be done — the way Ed wanted them done. Who wants to buy a new guitar, take it out of the box and find that it plays like shit and the intonation is off? It's hard enough to make guitars. Why not go the extra step at the very end to make the guitar as good as it can be with a great setup? It's really simple. We just want to treat people the way that we would want to be treated. We want to be detailed in what we present. We all play.

All of us. We're product people. If the product is great and we get enough people interested in it to actually try it, we feel confident that the product will meet with acceptance once it has an opportunity to be evaluated by a player.

VAN HALEN: We've built this family over the years at EVH that has continued to be the same people.

BRUCK: They have had long-standing relationships with Ed through EVH. Ed was incredibly demanding, but they all agree that he was amazing to work with. It was never a walk in the park. You would get challenged down to the last minute, and everything would go down to the wire because he would ask you to outperform constantly. Ed challenged all of us to get to what he wanted. He had this philosophy where he'd always ask for more than he needed. He'd explain that if you gave him more than he needed, then he could confidently dial it back to what he really required. It's extra reserve, versus coming up short for what you need. He knew that if he had a little more than necessary, he could dial back to what he truly was looking for in capacity. He constantly pushed us to deliver more.

I don't think people realize just how challenging it is to run a guitar company today.

BRUCK: The guitar business after Covid is different than what it was before. There are a lot of challenges that we are subject to — supply chain delays, cost increases, shipping delays, tube shortages — but we do what's necessary to prevail. It's not easy to run a guitar company.

When Ed first went to Fender we said, "Man, if we get 20 years under our belt we'll be a legacy brand." It was always our goal to leave an indelible mark like Fender and Gibson. That was in 2004, so we're only a year from reaching that milestone. Now I'm saying, "All right, let's go for 40 years!" Let's go as far as we can without compromise and continue this beautiful journey and amazing fascination that the world has with what Ed did. And let's move forward with great new ideas from Wolf. Everything is on the table — the past, present and future. We will always do things with quality and integrity. If you do all that, things will always be okay.

The world loves Van Halen's albums, Ed's playing and the songs that he wrote, but the EVH guitars and amps are another incredible gift that he left all of us. I don't think people truly appreciate all of the hard work that he and all of you put into building the brand into what it is today. Ed didn't just slap his name on a product and call it a day. He put a lot of effort into every single product and detail.

VAN HALEN: That's the thing about my dad. He never half-assed anything. That particularly goes for the brand.

BRUCK: Ed left us buckets and buckets of ideas. Some are already finished and just need a little extra tweaking to bring them along. Some people have seen the upcoming bass on the road with Wolfgang's band, and we also have some new pickups on the way. These are pickups with different voicings and variations that have been sitting on the shelf for six or seven years.

Nothing can replace having Ed here. But we are so fortunate for all of the people involved with this brand. Everybody takes it as serious as serious gets. It's been two years since we've lost Ed, we've worked our asses off and personally I feel that we've done a good job. We've done a job that Ed would be proud of and approve of. It's important to have that peace within yourself. That's how you keep on the right track. So far it feels like most people have said, "Good job." GW

"A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT I WAS PLAYING DAD'S WOLFGANG RELIC GUITAR FROM THE 2015 TOUR"
— Wolfgang Van Halen

Wolfgang with the EVH SA126 he played at the Taylor Hawkins tribute show in London. "I never heard a semi-hollow guitar sound like that before in my life," Bruck says. "That was our entire idea and goal"

ANDRAIA ALLSOP

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SOUND CHECK

the gear in review

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FENDER
American Vintage II 1973 Stratocaster

80
ORANGE
Distortion, Phaser and Sustain pedals

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ELECTRO-HARMONIX
String9 String Ensemble

Time Machine

MERIS LVX MODULAR DELAY SYSTEM

By Chris Gill

FORMED BY THREE individuals who had previously worked for Line 6 and Strymon, Meris caught the interest of musicians when it introduced its first product, the Model 440 mic preamp for 500 series format lunchbox racks, in 2014. More 500 series studio processors emerged over the next few years, followed in 2017 by the introduction of a highly impressive trio of pedals — the Ottobit Jr., Mercury7 and Polymoon — the first two being adapted from their 500 series rack counterparts. The Enzo Multi-Voice Instrument Synthesizer pedal and Hedra pedal/500 series 3-Voice Rhythmic Pitch Shifter came along next, earning even more attention and acclaim from adventurous players and sonic explorers.

Now, nearly nine years after Meris made its debut, the USA-based company has introduced its most impressive pedal to date — the LVX Modular Delay System. Like Meris's previous pedals, the LVX is more of an instrument unto itself than a typical processing tool, offering users an incredibly powerful processor that can generate tones and textures unlike anything ever heard before. With its intuitive interface, performance-friendly pedal design and infinitely versatile modular delay system architecture, the Meris LVX is a sound designer's ultimate dream.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

FEATURES The limited space for this review can't cover the incredible depth of the LVX's features (even a 10-page review would just scratch the surface), but I'll try to do justice to its main attributes. The heart of the LVX is

The power and appeal of the LVX lies in its otherworldly and sophisticated sonic landscapes that simply must be heard to be believed

two independent delay lines, each with a maximum of 2540ms of delay time. In addition to this, a true stereo 60-second looper is always available that can record processed and dry tones. The pedal provides 99 internal preset locations arranged in 33 banks of three presets each, including a "favorite" preset bank that always enables instant access to three presets. The top panel provides Time, Feedback, Modulation and Mix knobs, three Controller knobs with push functions for accessing additional pages/parameters, and four footswitches to engage preset/bank selection, tuner, tap and looper functions along with pushbutton LEDs that mimic their respective footswitch functions. Rear jacks include mono/stereo pairs of ¼-inch inputs and outputs, a ¼-inch expression pedal/switch jack, 5-pin DIN MIDI In and Out jacks and a USB-C port for loading firmware updates.

The heart of the LVX's processing is a versatile and deep selection of delay structures and types. Structures consist of Standard, MultiTap, Multi Filter, Poly (based on the Meris Polymoon), Reverse and Series, each offering a vast selection of parameters to tweak and explore. Delay types are digital, BBD (analog bucket brigade style delay) and Magnetic (tape delay with saturation, degradation and wow and flutter). The delays can be further processed with sophisticated dynamics, preamp, filter, pitch and modulation elements that include uncommon and unique processing like diffusion, bit crusher, ladder filter, poly chroma, granulize and more. The ADA, DSP, noise and other specs, in short, are state of the art.

PERFORMANCE While one could use the Meris LVX as a straightforward delay unit, that would be like driving a Bugatti Chiron on half-mile errands and never exceeding 20mph. The power and appeal of the LVX lies in its otherworldly and sophisticated sonic landscapes that simply must be heard to be believed. As a result, the factory presets do not include the usual dotted-eighth note and multi-tap effects but instead offer non-conventional sounds, including wild rhythmic patterns, unusual sequenced pitch shifting, synth-like pads, shimmering reverb-like resonance with infinite tails and sounds that evoke psychedelic outer space excursions, and bass-heavy descents into the depths of hell. You've probably heard the LVX on sci-fi, horror and fantasy productions, and if not you very likely will (get one now if you have any ambitions for doing soundtrack work).

The full-color graphic interface makes it satisfyingly easy to program incredibly sophisticated sounds. Editing presets involves pushing the C3 knob to access the edit page then scrolling through a rotating selection of categories with the C1 knob and adjusting parameters/settings with the C2 knob. An expression pedal can be used to morph between a variety of selected parameters simultaneously for complex effects. A growing variety of presets are also available for download from the robust LVX user community.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE:
$599
MANUFACTURER:
Meris, meris.us

- The Meris LVX provides dual delay lines each with a maximum delay time of 2540ms plus an independent 60-second looper.
- Structures (Standard, Multi-Tap, Multi Filter, Poly, Reverse and Series) and Delay types (digital, BBD and Magnetic) are individually selectable for each delay line.
- Dynamics, preamp, filter, pitch and modulation elements offer incredibly sophisticated sound design capabilities.
- A large full color display and multi-function control knobs make it easy to program effects that can be saved in 99 preset locations.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** Truly an instrument unto itself, the Meris LVX offers much more than delay effects by providing complex textures, rhythmic patterns, synth-like tones and more, ideal for the most adventurous and progressive musicians.

All Things Groovy

FENDER AMERICAN VINTAGE II 1973 STRATOCASTER

By Paul Riario

OF ALL THE carefully chosen guitars Fender unveiled in their exciting brand-new American Vintage II Series, I decided to check out one of the more overlooked models: the American Vintage II 1973 Stratocaster. Indeed, Seventies-era Strats have historically been perceived as a lesser Stratocaster (compared to pre-CBS Stratocasters) for many problematic reasons besides its most visible change — the enlarged and reshaped headstock. Sure, we all pined for the original smaller headstock Strats found in the hands of Clapton and Gilmour; however, many old-school players will recall that their first fond impressions of a Stratocaster had been the prevalent Seventies-era Strats being legitimized by local scenester guitarists and guitar idols from Blackmore to Malmsteen. But aside from debating the merits of a large or small Fender headstock, there seems to be a fashionable resurgence for "everything old is new again," as evidenced by the American Vintage II lineup of nearly period-correct models that span three classic decades of iconic Fender guitar and bass designs. And while the American Vintage II 1973 Stratocaster is meticulously built to original spec, what is abundantly clear is that Fender has skillfully improved the issues that made 1970s Stratocasters controversial, making this overhauled model a far more appealing instrument.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

FEATURES There's no need to step into a time machine; the American Vintage II 1973 Stratocaster is built to look and feel exactly like a new Strat plucked off the rack from a music store in 1970-something. What's noticeably absent is the boat-anchor weight and impenetrably thick poly-gloss finish found on many of its original Seventies-era predecessors. Now, while the AVII 1973 Strat is finished in a gloss polyurethane, it feels fairly soft rather than shellacked, and the guitar arrives at an acceptable welterweight of 7.5lbs. Another detectable difference is that the "C"-shape maple neck is no longer chunky, but fashioned to a comfortably rounded profile that is quintessential Fender and inarguably enjoyable. Of course, the guitar comes in either a round-laminated rosewood or maple fingerboard with a vintage curvature of a 7.25–inch radius that many modern players may not be accustomed to, but thankfully, the vintage tall frets will be agreeable to most players. Fender went to great lengths in balancing original spec with improved functionality because none of the guitar's sturdy hardware and solid construction appears wonky or flimsy. The period-accurate features like the "Bullet"-style truss rod nut, three-bolt neck plate with Micro-Tilt adjustment, large headstock with dual string trees and bigger Fender decal, vintage-style single-line "F" stamped tuners, and synchronized tremolo with bent steel saddles and cold rolled steel block all reflect its Seventies roots. Finally, the AVII 1973 Stratocaster is outfitted with a trio of Pure Vintage '73 staggered pole pickups and is offered in three classic colors (Aged Natural, Lake Placid Blue and Mocha) over an ash body, with the Mocha finish being the first custom color ever to feature a black pickguard on a Strat.

PERFORMANCE The American Vintage II 1973 Stratocaster is pretty much self-evident as an updated reissue of a classic Fender model — but I also feel it's a "corrected" version that doesn't cut corners and is closer to what Fender intends as the standard of a Seventies Stratocaster. It's superbly well made, plays effortlessly and feels substantial and seriously authentic, thanks to precision engineering and having much of its hardware being tooled on the original Fender factory machines from the Fifties and Sixties era. I also found the Pure Vintage '73 pickups dish out a brilliant cracked glass sparkle in their cleans and a distinctive flutey snarl when overdriven. It's a definable and crisp Seventies sound you can hear in the 2- and 4-notch positions — think Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama" or the bright choppy cleans and funky rhythmic stabs found in Ohio Players' "Love Rollercoaster." You'll dig, like me, that the American Vintage II 1973 Stratocaster is a breezy nostalgic ride that harkens back to a time when FM radio blared from muscle cars and bell bottoms were as wide as its headstock.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $2,279.99
MANUFACTURER: Fender, fender.com

- The Pure Vintage '73 pickups occupy a lower-output realm that ushers in crisp cleans and shimmery sparkle.
- The "C"-shape maple neck comes in either a round-laminated rosewood or maple fingerboard with a vintage 7.25–inch radius.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** The American Vintage II 1973 Stratocaster oozes pure Seventies vibe with a period-correct build, vintage-style hardware and authentic single-coil tones.

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

Blast from the Past

ORANGE DISTORTION, PHASER AND SUSTAIN PEDALS

By Chris Gill

BACK IN 1977 through 1979, Orange offered a trio of stomp boxes — the Distortion, Phazer and Sustain — that slipped off the radar almost instantly after they were released. In fact, the pedals were so far off the radar that longtime employees at Orange had forgotten they existed until someone waxed poetic about a vintage Orange Sustain pedal on the company's forum in 2019. During the early days of the Covid pandemic in 2020, Mick Dines, whose tenure with Orange dated back to the early Seventies, stumbled across the original schematics for these pedals and passed them on to lead amp designer Ade Emsley. Orange gathered original examples from the public via social media for reference, and two years later the Orange Distortion, Phaser and Sustain pedals were released.

FEATURES These new Orange pedals are part-reissue/part-tribute to the originals, offering vintage late-Seventies sounds and chunky, platform heel-friendly oversized housing combined with modern attributes like 9V DC power and LED on/off indicators. The Phaser (now spelled with an "s" replacing the original's "z") and Sustain pedals replicate the circuits and sounds of their predecessors, while the Distortion offers an all-new circuit, and all of the circuits were enhanced to minimize noise and improve performance specs to modern standards.

Befitting a Seventies-style stomp box, each pedal provides a bare minimum of controls. The Distortion and Sustain pedals have level and depth knobs, while the Phaser has a solitary speed control. The Distortion and Phaser pedals each also have a single internal trim pot. The Distortion's trim pot adjusts treble EQ, while the Phaser's should be left as-is, as it dials in a very small sweet spot for the phase shift effect's depth. The Phaser is true bypass, and the Distortion and Sustain pedals feature a buffered bypass circuit. In addition, the heavy-duty footswitch is mounted separately from the PCB to facilitate servicing. All three pedals are powered via an optional 9V DC power source (not included) and do not run on batteries.

PERFORMANCE From the oversized aluminum enclosures to the bright orange paint and period-correct fonts, all three pedals ooze Seventies vibe. That carries over to the sound of each pedal as well, although thankfully the excess noise has gone the way of the polyester leisure suit.

The Distortion delivers beastly bassy growl and deep throated midrange. I tweaked the internal treble trim pot, but I liked the factory setting the best as boosting the treble slimmed down the overall body. The Depth knob dials in an impressive amount of gain that delivers raunchy distortion while maintaining natural dynamics and expressiveness. With the Depth dialed down and the Level boosted, the pedal produces a sweet overdrive boost with fat body and just a hint of grit. The Seventies never sounded so good.

The Phaser sounds close to a well-known smaller one-knob phase shift pedal that's also bright orange, but the flavor here is just a touch deeper. The solitary speed knob also provides a wider range, going from a slow-as-molasses crawl to a warbling hummingbird tremolo. The texture is nice and chewy, but the effect doesn't overshadow the guitar's natural tonal personality and is more of an added spice than the main course.

The Sustain pedal is a compressor that also provides a generous amount of volume and gain boost, if desired. The compression effect is sweet and subtle, tightening up the definition of arpeggio patterns and improving the balance between chords and solos. It has none of the squish and squash of other Seventies compressors, and as a result its effect is more natural sounding. The Level and Depth controls can also be set to provide a very transparent clean boost.

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

Buzz Bin
Electro-Harmonix String9 String Ensemble

I ALWAYS FELT Electro-Harmonix struck sonic gold with their assorted 9 Series stompboxes, which aim to reshape your dry guitar tone into a synthesized cornucopia of orchestral, keyboard, bass, brass and woodwind instrument emulations without having to install any special pickup or requiring external gear. Now, while these polyphonic simulations sounded reasonably great to far-out, none of the 9 Series pedals were meant to replace the real thing, or for that matter, band members. What is more important is how many players cleverly approached the utility and application of these sounds when employing these wondrous pedals. Building upon the success of the former 9 Series iterations, Electro-Harmonix has released the String9 String Ensemble, which is what you probably reckoned it would be — a polyphonic string ensemble synthesizer with a few orchestral synth goodies as well as freeze functions and textural effects baked in.

The String9 is outfitted with separate Effect and Dry volume controls to fine-tune or blend their mix from the "Effects" output jack, and there's also a "Dry" output jack that outputs the input signal at unity gain at all times. Controls 1 and 2 adjust the unique parameters and tailored functions for each patch, and finally, the rotary Patch knob selects the nine onboard string ensemble and string synthesizer sounds. Though the String9 doesn't run on a battery, it does come with a 9-volt power supply.

Obviously, the String9 sounds best and most realistic if you split the signal from the outputs (Dry into a guitar amp and Effect into either an audio interface or PA), but straight into an amp from the Effect output still sounds just as powerful. Patches like June-O, AARP and Crewman capture renowned string synthesizer tones, while PCM samples a small studio string section from a vintage PCM keyboard and Floppy emulates mechanical string machines like the Mellotron and Orchestron. Symphonic is the heart of the pedal, recreating a large symphony orchestra featuring an octave-down effect on the lower range for a deeply layered and sustained sound. The pedal has a firm tracking response with very low latency, and I found arpeggiating chords work best at creating a texturally fat and sustained string pad. The last three patches are freeze functions based on the other patches, and you can turn the bypass footswitch into a manual freeze once you set CTRL 2 past noon. The String9 is fascinatingly immersive and fun for adding strings and synth-like color to your guitar signal.

— Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: $259.50

MANUFACTURER: Electro-Harmonix, ehx.com

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $249 (each)
MANUFACTURER:
Orange Amps,
orangeamps.com

- Modern enhancements include LED on/off indicators, 9V DC power adapter jacks and refined circuitry that minimizes noise.
- The Phaser and Sustain pedals are based on the original circuits, while the Distortion pedal features a new design that still offers classic sounds.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
  Offering sounds that are as big and bold as their Seventies-style oversized enclosures and bright orange paint jobs, Orange's new trio of stomp boxes revive classic tones while providing the benefits of modern enhancements.

IN DEEP
by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2023

OPEN WATERS

Making the most of open strings when soloing

THESE LAST FEW columns have been dedicated to exploring soloing approaches to the Muddy Waters blues classic, "Rollin' Stone." The song is played in the key of E, and, true to the style of acoustic Delta blues, as well as electric Chicago blues, many licks are played within the first few frets and incorporate open strings. Ample evidence of this is heard in the acoustic playing of Robert Johnson, Big Bill Broonzy and Lightning Hopkins, as well as the electric playing of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Freddie King, Magic Sam and many others.

When utilizing the open strings for solo-type licks in the key of E, most often these licks are based on the E minor pentatonic (E, G, A, B, D), the E blues scale (E, G, A, B♭, B, D) or slight variations on either that will also include the major 3rd, G♯, and the major 6th, C♯, referencing the E Mixolydian mode (E, F♯, G♯, A, B, C♯, D).

"Modern" blues/rock guitarists like Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Johnny Winter, and Jimmy Page learned the licks of the first-generation blues masters and ramped them up to new levels of speed and intensity. This approach was explored further by Stevie Ray Vaughan, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Joe Bonamassa and every guitarist that plays in a blues/rock style.

There is a vast array of standard licks based on the E blues scale that utilize open strings. **FIGURE 1** illustrates a typical solo-type phrase that moves quickly across all six strings in a descending manner, built from a combination of notes played at the 2nd and 3rd frets that alternate with the open strings. Phrases like this can be played quickly via the use of bends, hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides. Jimi Hendrix blazed new trails with licks like this on "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," as did Stevie Ray Vaughan with "Scuttle Buttin'."

Let's break the phrase down to its key components. **FIGURE 2** illustrates the opening five-note lick, which starts with a half-step bend on the G string's 3rd fret, followed by the open B and high E strings and then a pull-off from D, on the B string's, 3rd fret, to the open string. "Cycle" this one-beat shape by playing it repeatedly in sequence.

FIGURE 3 builds on the idea by adding melodic phrases on the top two strings. Alternating in this way between the open high E and fretted G and F♯ notes is something one will find in the playing of T-Bone Walker (though, in T-Bone's case, it is usually done as all fretted notes in the key of G). In **FIGURE 4**, F and F♯ at the 1st and 2nd frets are played in the place of F♯ and G, a technique popularized by Stevie Ray Vaughan.

FIGURE 5 offers yet another twist on this type of soloing approach.

The best way to work these phrases into your soloing is to play through them slowly and methodically. **FIGURES 6-9** focus on the individual elements, or "puzzle pieces,"" that you can put together in pretty much any way you please.

FIG. 1 (E7)

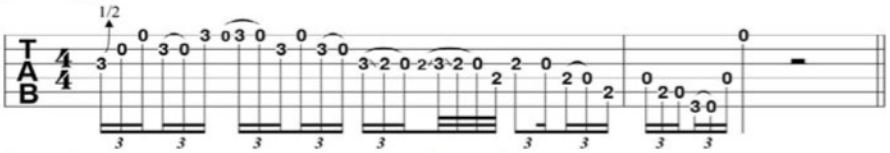


FIG. 2

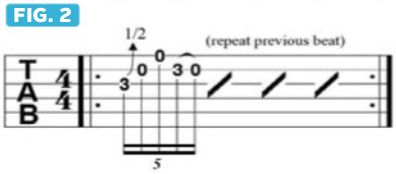


FIG. 3

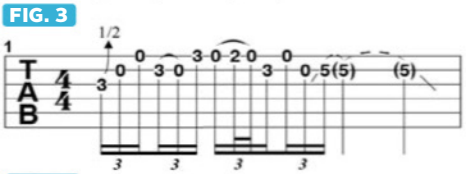


FIG. 4

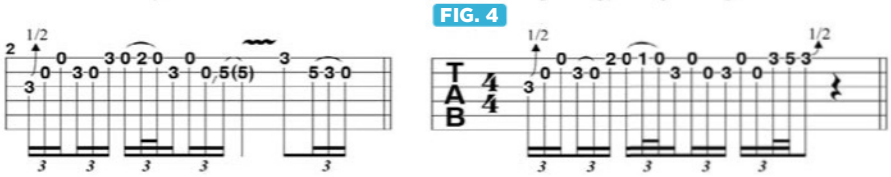


FIG. 5

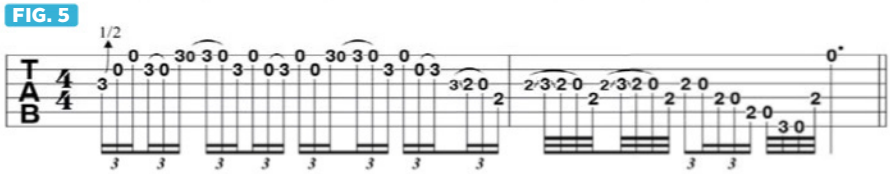


FIG. 6

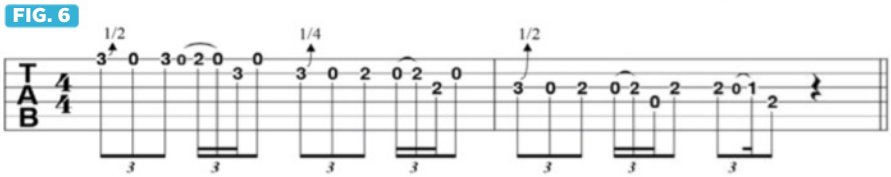
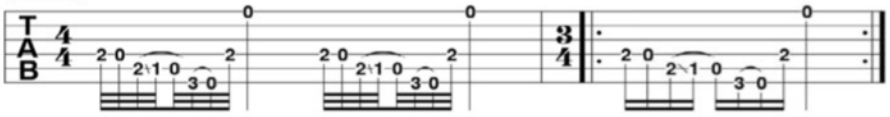


FIG. 7

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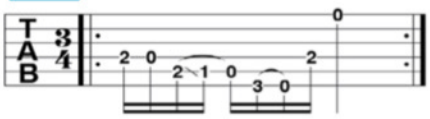
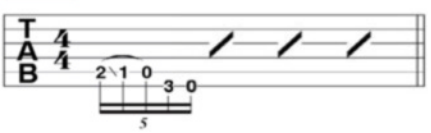


FIG. 9

***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction, via his many best-selling instructional DVDs, transcription books and online lessons. His new album, *Light of Love*, is available from andyaledort.com and all streaming services.**

ALISON HASBACH

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2023

MINOR DETAILS

Soloing over a minor blues

WAY BACK IN 2003 — 20 years ago! — I recorded a collection of some of my favorite blues classics, such as B.B. King's "You Upset Me Baby," Freddie King's "Pack It Up" and Muddy Waters' "Walkin' Blues," and released the album *Blues Deluxe*, which went on to become one of my most well-known recordings. I recently got to work on recording its followup, aptly titled, *Blues Deluxe Vol. 2*, on which I cover another handful of some of my all-time favorite blues songs.

One of the tunes we covered is a somewhat less well-known but no less brilliant Bobby "Blue" Bland track, "Twenty-Four Hour Blues." Bobby has always been one of my favorite singers, bandleaders, arrangers and songwriters, and he also recorded a handful of incredible albums with his close friend B.B. King. It was B.B. that encouraged Bobby to become a solo artist, and some of the records they made together, like "Let the Good Times Roll" and the classic live albums, *Together for the First Time Live* and *Together Again Live*, remain among my favorite blues records. I wish I had a time machine so that I could go back and see those concerts from the Seventies!

"Twenty-Four Hour Blues" is a minor blues, which I play in the key of G minor. The original recording, cut during the sessions for the 1974 album, *Dreamer*, featured an all-star band based on the West Coast, with Larry Carlton on guitar, whose playing is, of course, spectacular.

The groove is slow and funky, in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, along the lines of **FIGURE 1**. The example illustrates two bars of Gm followed by two bars of Cm, with accented chord hits on beat 2 and a "connecting" single-note phrase across beats 3 and 4.

The tune begins with a very cool intro, approximated here in **FIGURE 2**. A single-note melody is played over E♭/F to Cm to Gm and initially gives the impression that it could be based on either the B♭ major pentatonic scale (B♭, C, D, F, G) or its relative minor, G minor pentatonic (G, B♭, C, D, F). Once the Gm chord hits, it's clear that the song is rooted in the key of G minor.

When playing a minor blues, I love to explore licks and phrases on the bottom three strings, as I feel I can get into some very emotive and expressive lines in the lower register. In **FIGURE 3**, the lines are based on the G blues scale (G, B♭, C, D♭, D, F), with the inclusion of the 2nd, A. In **FIGURE 4**, I build on these types of melodic lines as I move up to the higher strings and upper register before working my way all the way back down by the end of the phrase.

There is one riff I did on the solo for the track that I will not try to recreate for this column because I wouldn't be able to if my life depended upon it! It was a "stream of consciousness" thing that I somehow stuck the landing on, though if I tried to replicate it now, I wouldn't even make the podium!

FIG. 1 Gm Cm

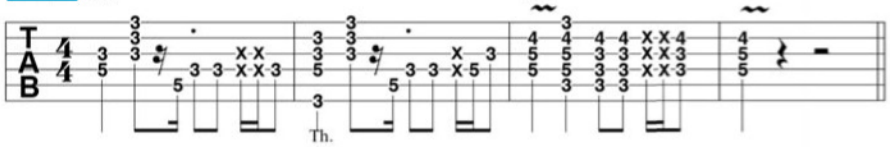


FIG. 2 (Gm) (E♭/F) (Cm) (Gm)

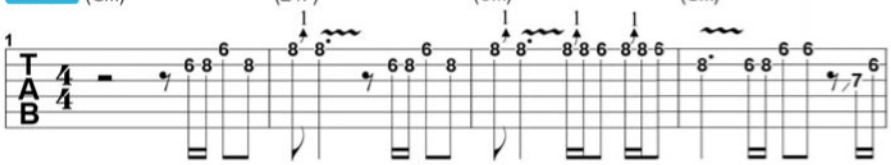



FIG. 3 (Gm)

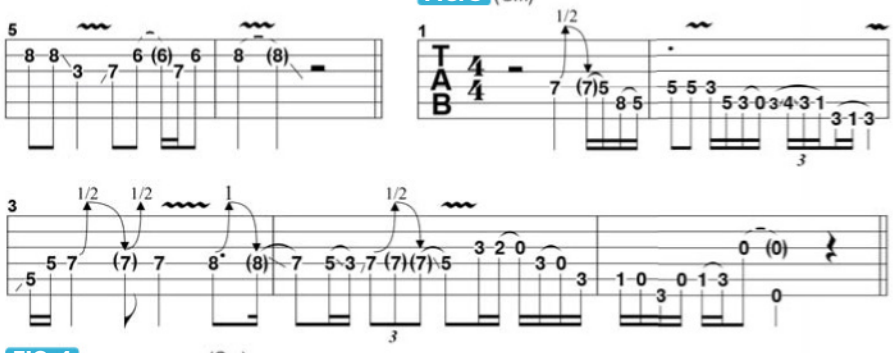
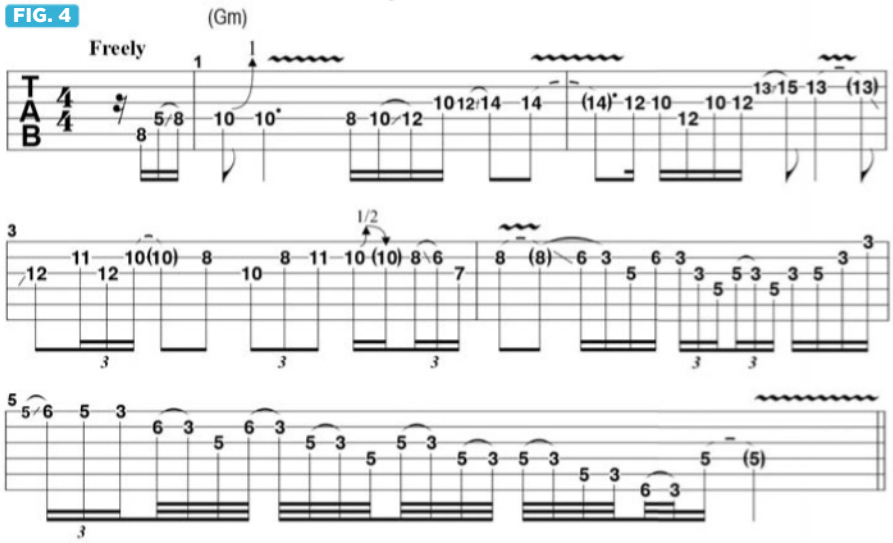


FIG. 4 (Gm) Freely



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

ELEANOR JANE

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2023

THE BENDS, PART 4

Targeting chord tones with string bends

STRING BENDING OFFERS us guitarists a highly effective way to evoke a wide range of sounds and emotions from our instrument and emulate some of the qualities of the human voice, such as adding vibrato to a note, or seamlessly sliding, or gliding, from one pitch up or down to another, what is known as *glissando*. All of our favorite players use bending as an essential expressive tool when soloing. In this fourth installment examining this highly effective and useful technique, I'll play through a 24-bar minor blues progression in the key of C♯ minor, touching on as many different approaches to string bending as I can (see **FIGURE 1**).

Structurally, the 24-bar progression doubles the number of bars spent on each chord in a standard 12-bar form. Specifically, the i (one minor) chord, C♯m, is played for eight bars, followed by four bars on the iv (four minor) chord, F♯m, then four bars back on the i, C♯m. At this point, I add a slight variation, or twist, on the basic i - iv - v minor blues progression; instead of going to the v (five minor) chord, Gm, I go to the ♭VI (flat 6) chord, A7, for two bars, followed by a major version of the V (five) chord, G♯7, for two bars. The progression then concludes with four bars on the i, C♯m.

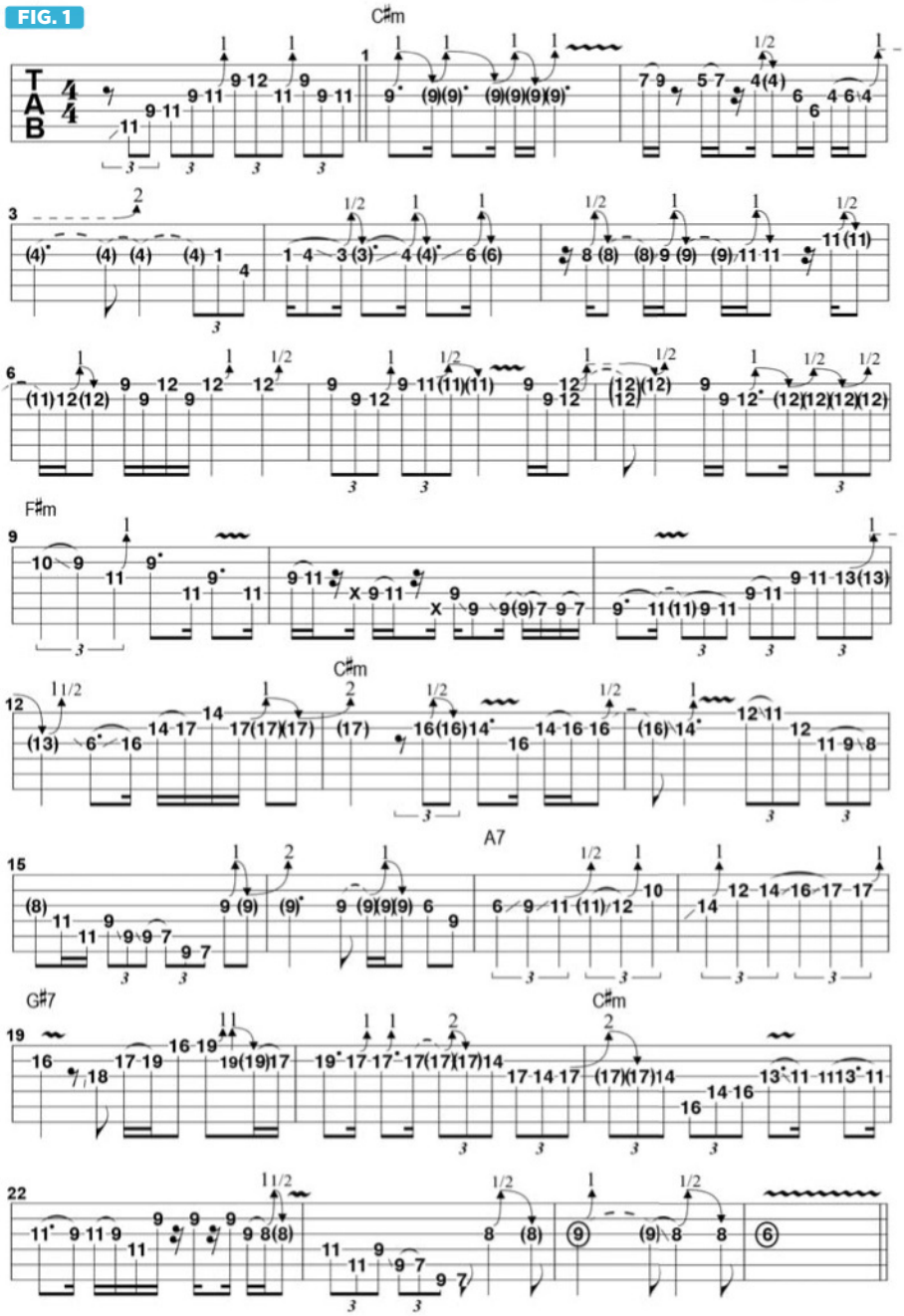
For the solo, I'm primarily utilizing notes from the C♯ Dorian mode (C♯, D♯, E, F♯, G♯, A♯, B) as a basic framework for my lines. But when the progression moves to F♯m, I substitute an A note for A♯, as A is the minor 3rd of that chord. This switch puts us in the C♯ Aeolian mode (C♯, D♯, E, F♯, G♯, A, B), which may also be thought of as F♯ Dorian (F♯, G♯, A, B, C♯, D♯, E). When we get to A7, I again substitute A for A♯, as A is that chord's root.

All that said, I don't want you to think that it's essential to be focused on scales/modes while trying to play in a musical way. While it is very helpful to know all your chord-scale relationships, your solo will only be effective if its musicality connects with the listener.

An alternative, simpler, improvisational approach to take here is to build your lines from a minor pentatonic viewpoint (C♯ minor pentatonic scale: C♯, E, F♯, G♯, B) and add the "modal" pitches D♯ and either A♯ or A, as tones that provide other colors and places to bend up to or back from. For example, in bar 2, I bend D♯ up a half step to E and then release back to D♯. At the end of bar 5, I bend A♯ up a half step to B then quickly release back to A♯. As you study this solo, you'll find more examples of this approach.

By the way, the track I'm soloing over here comes from my TrueFire In the Jam course, where you can find a host of other backing tracks to solo over. Check them out!

FIG. 1



SIMONE CECHETTI

Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His new album, *Electric Truth*, is out now. Visit andytimmons.com and guitarxperience.net to check out his recordings and many instructional releases.

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2023

SWITCHING GEARS

My varied soloing approaches on "Brown Gatton"

LAST MONTH, I presented the meat and potatoes of the tune "Brown Gatton," a song from my 2017 album, *Still*, that is a musical tribute to two of my heroes — the somewhat unlikely duo of the Godfather of Soul, James Brown, and jazz/rock/country guitar wizard Danny Gatton. This month, I'd like to share some of the approaches I use for soloing on the tune.

As I explained previously, after every three bars of $\frac{4}{4}$ time there's a bar of $\frac{2}{4}$. The recurrent appearance of this "half bar" allows for some cool and unusual phrasing when soloing over the form. This is especially true when moving between the tune's two primary chords, E7 and C7.

As illustrated in **FIGURE 1**, just prior to the solo section, we come out of the bridge and the accented B9 chords (bars 1 and 2), at which point I begin soloing over E7 in groups of three bars of $\frac{4}{4}$ followed by a single bar of $\frac{2}{4}$. I base my phrases here on the E major pentatonic scale (E, F♯, G♯, B, C♯) with a nod to E minor pentatonic (E, G, A, B, D) via the inclusion of the notes G and A. Bar 3 ends with a straight-up E minor pentatonic lick with the inclusion of the major 3rd, G♯. Bar 4 serves as the $\frac{2}{4}$ bar, with a return to $\frac{4}{4}$ in bar 5. As you can see, I use the return to $\frac{4}{4}$ as an opportunity to begin a new musical idea. You can hear me set up that new phrase with the ascending line that falls in the $\frac{2}{4}$ bar and then the new "idea" starts in a spot that usually would be in the middle of a $\frac{4}{4}$ bar. Shifting back to $\frac{4}{4}$ at this point gives the solo a lift while also presenting a twist to the way the lines are phrased. Also, the rhythm section hits the new downbeat of "one" at the start of the return to $\frac{4}{4}$, which accentuates the shifting meters.

FIGURE 2 illustrates this in another way: with the first bar serving as a pick-up, I begin the phrase in bars 1 and 2 the same way each time and then resolve the idea in bars 3 through 4, with that $\frac{2}{4}$ bar providing a rhythmic twist leading into the next idea.

When you carry a musical idea "through the bar line" like this, it's very effective, especially the way we do it here with the E7 - C7 chord change. In **FIGURE 3,** I begin with three bars solidly based around the E blues scale (E, G, A, B♭, B, D), and then the half-bar of $\frac{2}{4}$ in bar 4 provides a means to shift to the C7 chord in bar 5, with the melody now based around the C blues scale (C, E♭, F, G♭, G, B♭).

This structure affords me many opportunities to move from E7 to C7, or vice versa, in interesting and unexpected ways. **FIGURE 4** features a jazzy line with chromatic passing tones that illustrates how I might move from C7 back to E7, with that half-bar always providing a clear "turnaround" in the progression.

FIG. 1

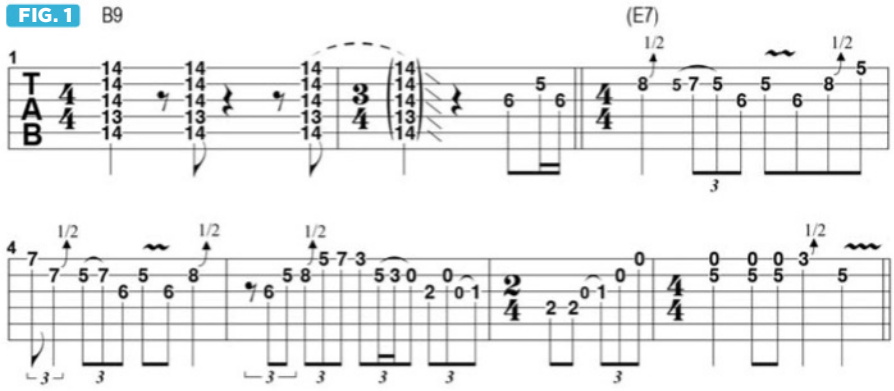


FIG. 2

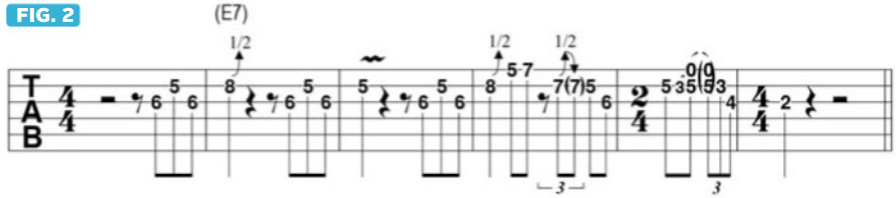


FIG. 3

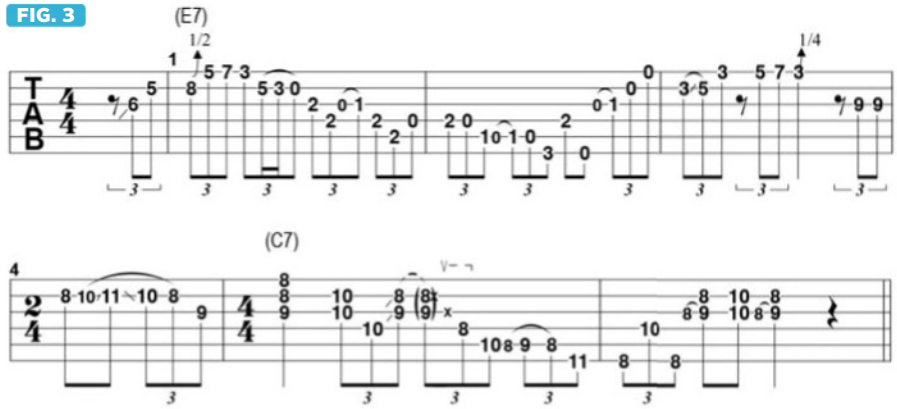
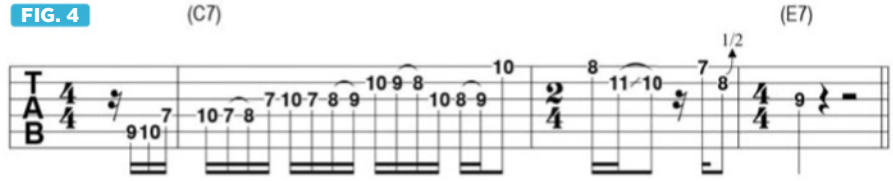


FIG. 4



Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard (not to mention an effective instructor). His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now. For more info, check out joshsmithguitar.com.

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"BLUE ON BLACK"
Five Finger Death Punch

(*featuring Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Brantley Gilbert and Brian May*)

THIS STAR-STUDDED 2019 cover of a popular rock song originally recorded in 1998 by blues-rock sensation Kenny Wayne Shepherd [*pictured*] features KWS and legendary Queen axman Brian May as guest soloists, with Five Finger Death Punch guitarists Jason Hook and Zoltan Bathory accompanying.

As they customarily do, Hook and Bathory employed unusually low baritone tunings for their parts, while Shepherd went with drop-D and May played in either standard or drop-D. For the sake of convenience, practicality and chord shape familiarity, we've arranged most of the guitar parts in our transcription for drop-D tuning.

Hook and Bathory kick off the arrangement with their tastefully layered reconfiguration of the song's repeating three-chord progression (see bars 1-5, Gtrs. 1 and 2), which then serves as the foundational accompaniment for the verses. Notice how the 12-string acoustic guitar (Gtr. 1) exploits the rich timbre of the open, octave-doubled strings while an electric six-string with overdrive and tremolo provides a complementary higher part, with both guitars arpeggiating the shapes and letting the notes of each chord ring as much as possible.

At the chorus (section C) the groove takes a decidedly metal turn, with high-gain electric guitars providing a roaring downpicked power-chord reading of the repeating progression, in signature FFDP fashion. To prevent any unwanted open notes from sounding during the percussive "scratch" strums (indicated by X's), lightly lay all four fret-hand fingers across the strings.

Shepherd's and May's solos (sections D and F) feature the two celebrated guitarists' distinctive tones, touches and phrasing approaches, especially when it comes to string bending and vibrato. It's interesting to note that Kenny took a mostly D minor pentatonic approach to his lines (D, F, G, A, C), whereas Brian, perhaps for the sake of providing contrast, opted to utilize the warmer-sounding parallel D major pentatonic scale (D, E, F♯, A, B) for most of his licks.

"BLACK SUMMER"
Red Hot Chili Peppers

THIS FRESH OFFERING from the RHCP, featuring the classic lineup with longtime guitarist John Frusciante, finds the band in top form, both in terms of songwriting and playing. John craftily applies his signature r&b/Hendrix-influenced chord-melody-style riffing approach to both the song's intro and the brief interlude between the verses (see sections A and C), spicing up stock barre-chords with soulful finger slides and decorative hammer-ons and pull-offs to or from chordal "extensions." The guitarist enhances the sound of his riffs here by using his trusty Boss CE-1 Chorus Ensemble pedal (or a clone) to add a warbly, psychedelic tremolo effect to his slightly overdriven tone.

Frusciante takes a more straightforward rhythm approach during the song's verses and chorus (sections B, D and E), strumming major and minor barre chords while Flea provides one of his signature hooky, in-the-pocket bass lines, which beautifully describes the chord changes.

John serves up a characteristically melodic solo at section F, basing most of his phrases on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) while thoughtfully acknowledging the changes by emphasizing the chord tones in his lines. Notice how the guitarist tastefully uses bends, hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides to make his phrases sing. Frusciante also ventures outside of E minor pentatonic to target the major 3rd of certain chords. For example, he plays F♯ over the D chords in bars 52, 55, 57, 60 and 63, and G♯ over the pivotal E/G♯ chord in bar 66.

The Peppers conclude this arrangement with one of their trademark climactic outros (see section I), for which Frusciante downpicks/strums an unbroken stream of eighth notes, economically outlining an implied progression with two-note shapes and building rhythmic tension as the song draws to a close. Notice how the guitarist toggles back and forth between single notes on the D and G strings during the first six bars of the repeating eight-bar cycle as Flea touches upon the root and either the 3rd or 5th of each implied chord, with the two parts creating an interesting melodic counterpoint.

"BADFISH"
Sublime

A FAN FAVORITE, this funky, downtempo song from Sublime's 1992 debut album features guitarist-vocalist Bradley Nowell poignantly singing a poetic tale of his life struggles, in a way that kind of eerily foreshadowed his tragic demise four years later.

The song begins softly, with two acoustic guitars, a 12-string (Gtr. 1) and a six-string (Gtr. 2), playing a laid-back four-bar chord progression (A - Bm - G - A) twice, with the more strummy 12-string part providing the musical meat and potatoes and the sparser six-string part adding complementary arpeggiation and melodic activity.

When the verse kicks in at section B, the instrumentation abruptly changes to clean electric guitar (Gtr. 3), bass and drums, with Nowell strumming ska-reggae-style voicings of A, Bm and G on the top three strings with a "scratch" rhythm feel, using downstrokes for all the eighth-note rhythms and quick down-up strums for the pairs of 16th notes. When playing this part, form the full six-string barre chord shapes shown at the beginning of the transcription, as opposed to only fretting the notes on the top three strings. Doing so will ensure that you don't inadvertently graze and sound the open D, A or low E strings when strumming, which could happen all too easily.

The so-called scratch strums, indicated by X's in the tablature, are performed by momentarily loosening your fret hand's grip on the chord shape as you strum. You don't want to let go of the strings, however, as that could cause open notes to sound. You just want the strings to break contact with the frets, so that they're muffled by the fingers and all you hear is a pitchless, percussive "chik" sound when you strum.

Notice that certain chord hits have a small black dot over the tab numbers. That's called a *staccato* marking, and it tells you that the chord's duration is to be shortened by 50%, as if there were a 16th rest right after it. To stop the notes from ringing, use the same fret-hand muting technique detailed above, except here you fret and strum the chord normally, *then* relax your grip on the strings, so as to "choke" them.

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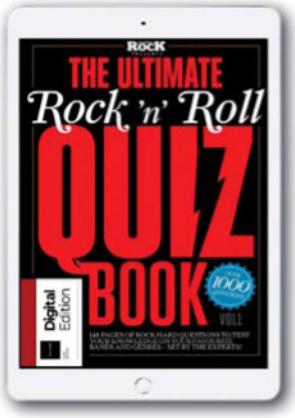

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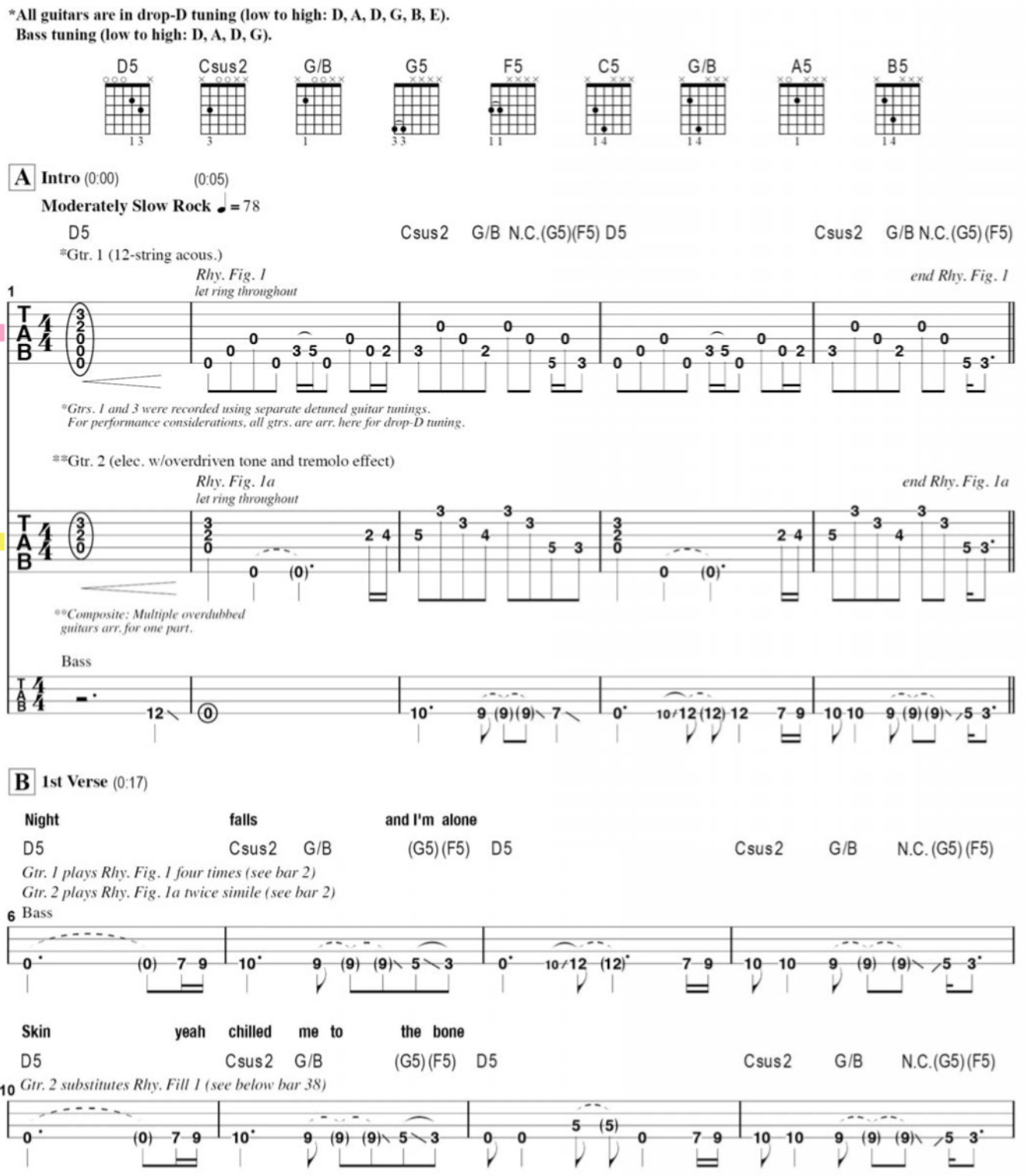
"BLUE ON BLACK"

Five Finger Death Punch (w/Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Brantley Gilbert & Brian May)

As heard **ONLINE**

Words and Music by TIA SILLERS, MARK SELBY *and* KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN



"BLUE ON BLACK"
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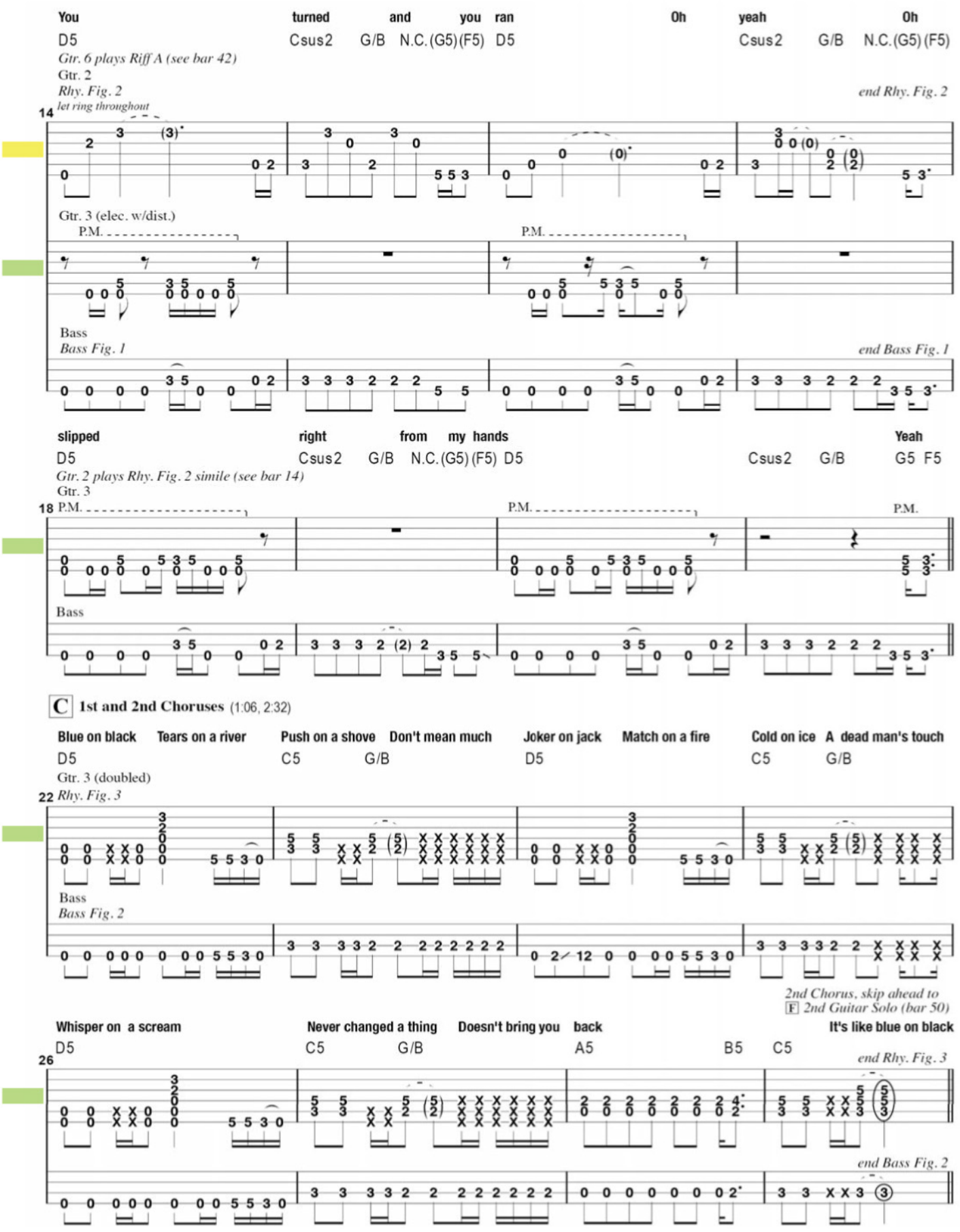
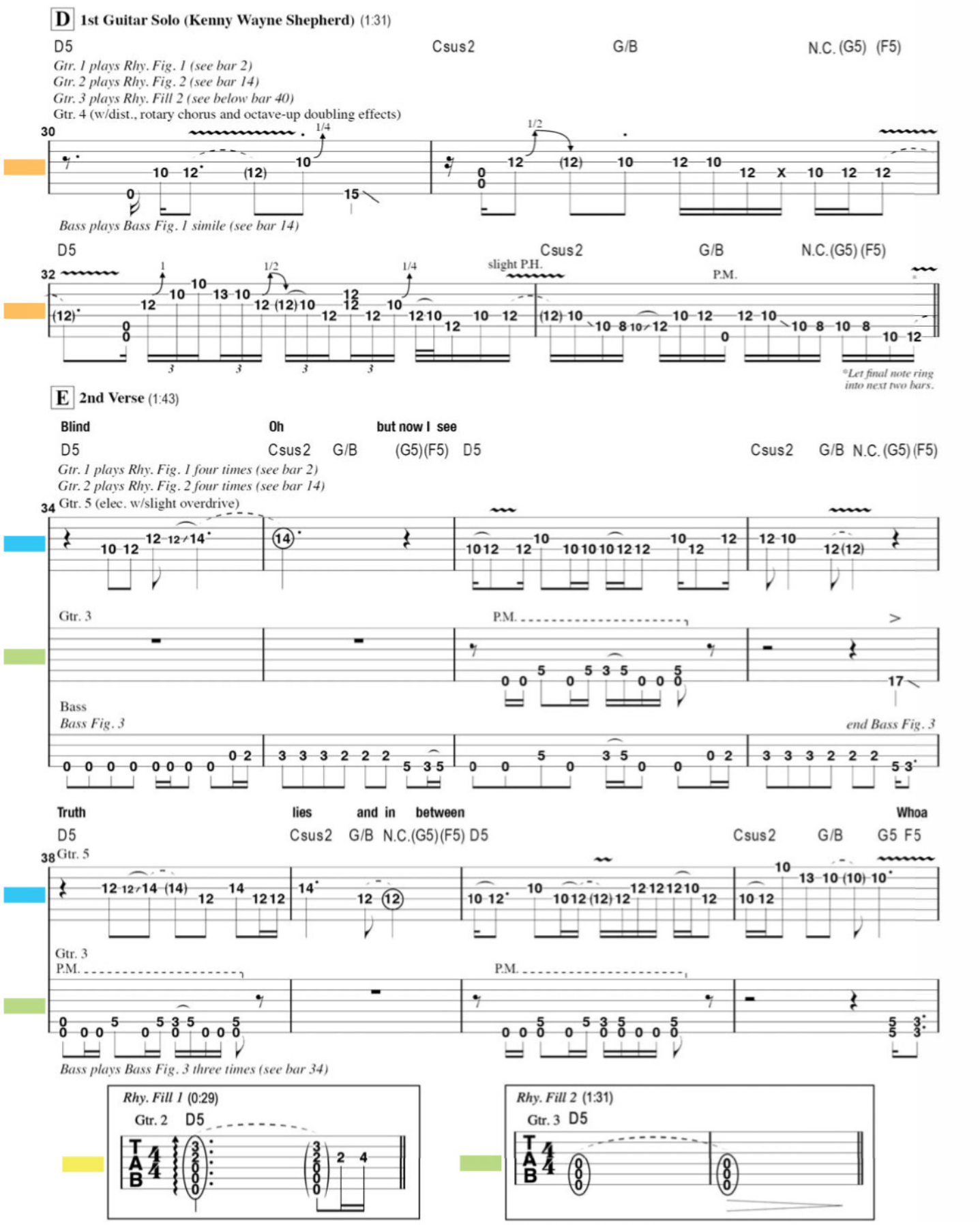
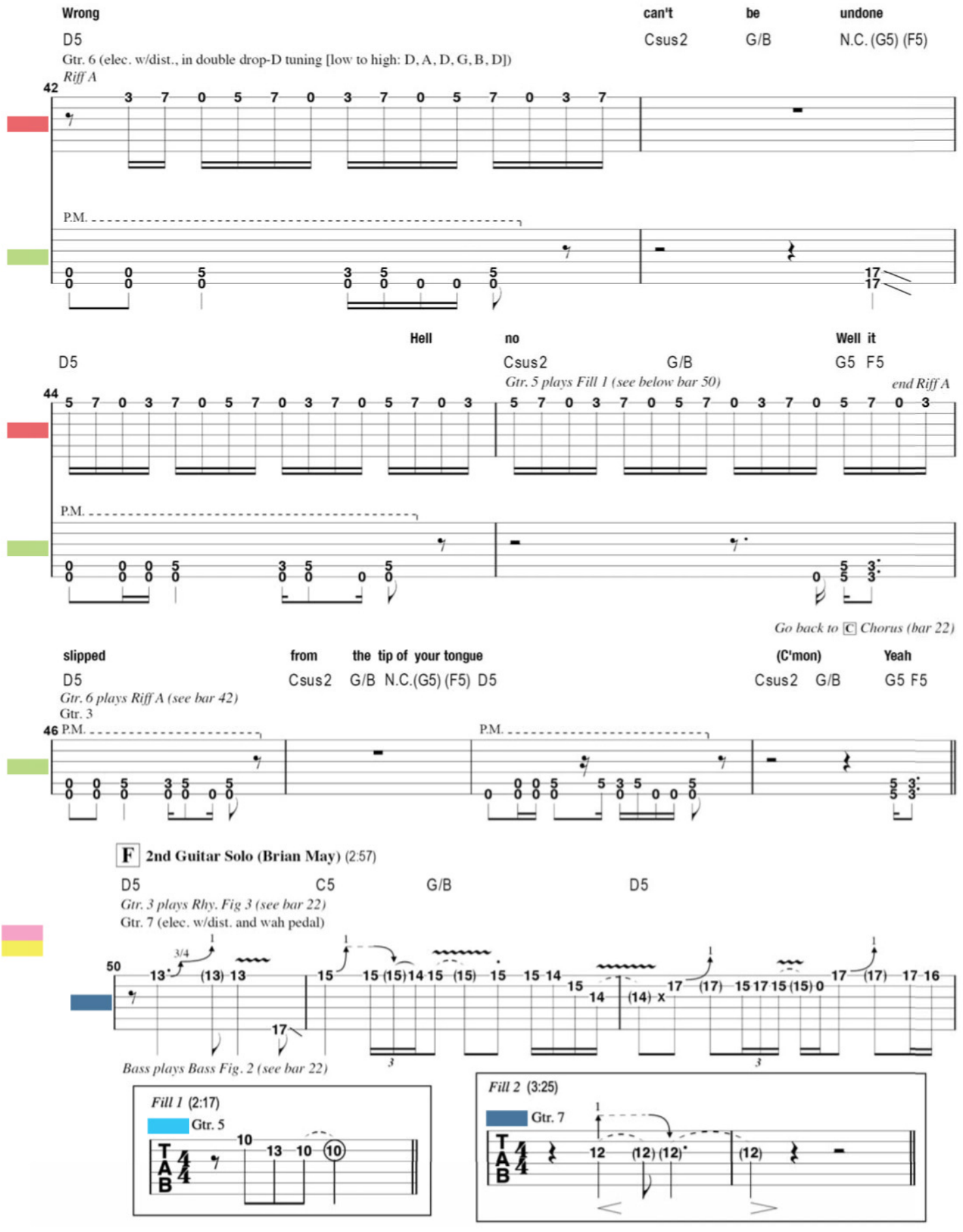
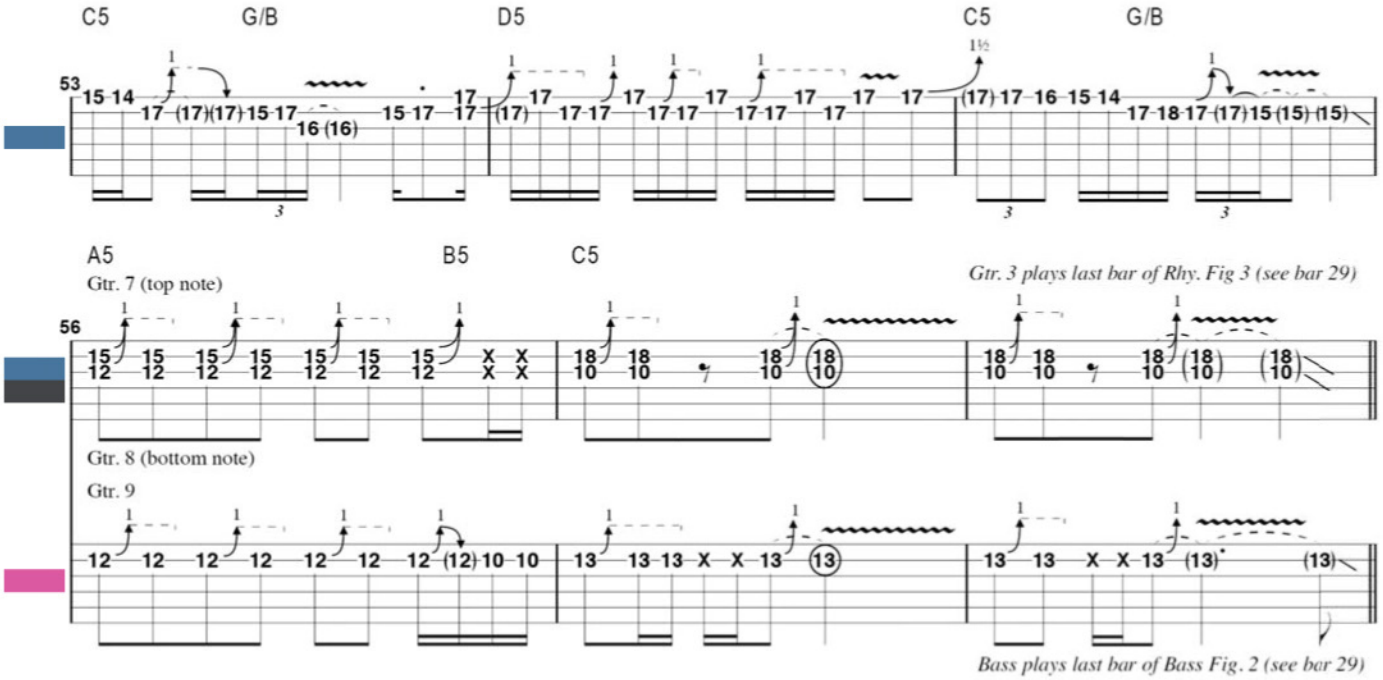
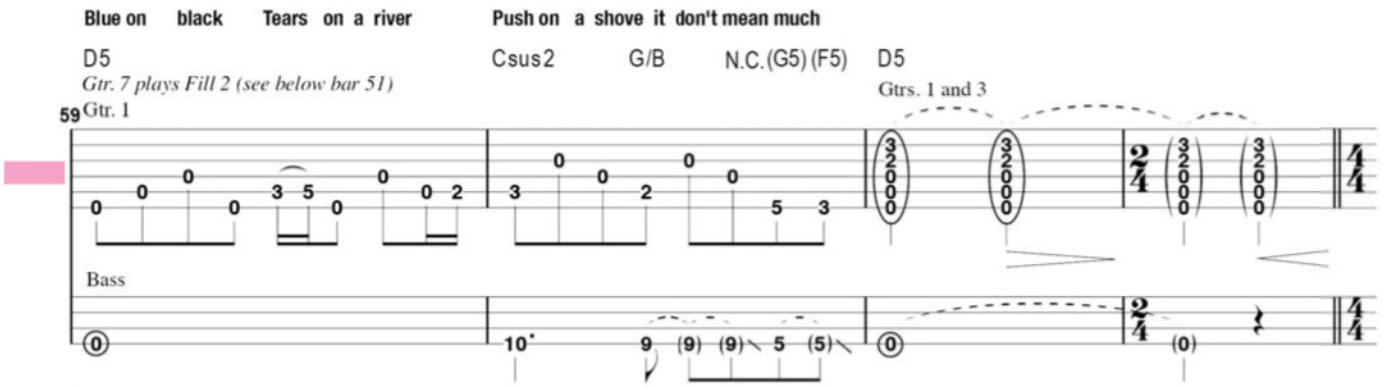

You turned and you ran Oh yeah Oh
D5 Csus2 G/B N.C.(G5)(F5) D5 Csus2 G/B N.C.(G5)(F5)
Gtr. 6 plays Riff A (see bar 42)
Gtr. 2
Rhy. Fig. 2
let ring throughout
end Rhy. Fig. 2
14
Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)
P.M.
Bass
Bass Fig. 1
end Bass Fig. 1
slipped right from my hands Yeah
D5 Csus2 G/B N.C.(G5)(F5) D5 Csus2 G/B G5 F5
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see bar 14)
Gtr. 3
18
P.M.
Bass
C 1st and 2nd Choruses (1:06, 2:32)
Blue on black Tears on a river Push on a shove Don't mean much Joker on jack Match on a fire Cold on ice A dead man's touch
D5 C5 G/B D5 C5 G/B
Gtr. 3 (doubled)
22
Rhy. Fig. 3
Bass
Bass Fig. 2
2nd Chorus, skip ahead to
F 2nd Guitar Solo (bar 50)
Whisper on a scream Never changed a thing Doesn't bring you back It's like blue on black
D5 C5 G/B A5 B5 C5
26
end Rhy. Fig. 3
end Bass Fig. 2


D 1st Guitar Solo (Kenny Wayne Shepherd) (1:31)
D5
Csus2
G/B
N.C. (G5) (F5)
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 2)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 14)
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fill 2 (see below bar 40)
Gtr. 4 (w/dist., rotary chorus and octave-up doubling effects)
30
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 14)
32
slight P.H.
P.M.
*Let final note ring into next two bars.
E 2nd Verse (1:43)
Blind
Oh
but now I see
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 2)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 four times (see bar 14)
34
Gtr. 5 (elec. w/slight overdrive)
Gtr. 3
Bass
Bass Fig. 3
end Bass Fig. 3
Truth
lies
and in
between
Whoa
G5 F5
38
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times (see bar 34)
Rhy. Fill 1 (0:29)
Gtr. 2 D5
Rhy. Fill 2 (1:31)
Gtr. 3 D5

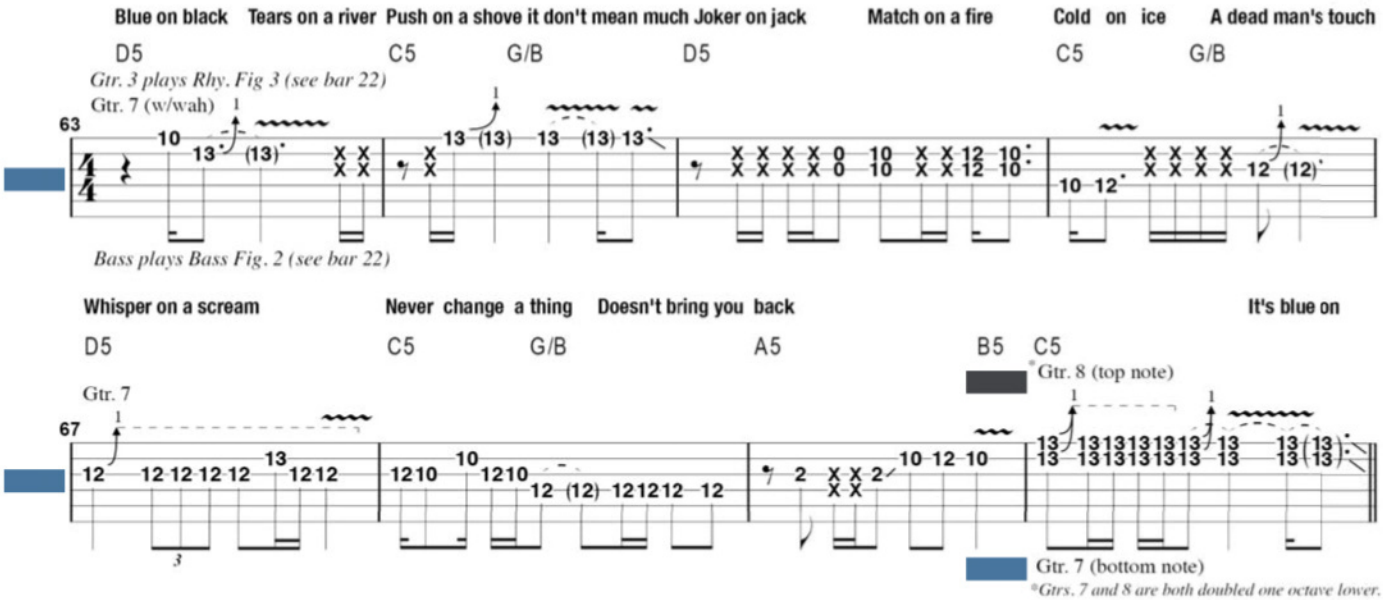

Wrong
can't
be
undone
D5
Csus2
G/B
N.C. (G5) (F5)
Gtr. 6 (elec. w/dist., in double drop-D tuning [low to high: D, A, D, G, B, D])
Riff A
42
P.M.
Hell
no
Well it
D5
Csus2
G/B
G5 F5
Gtr. 5 plays Fill 1 (see below bar 50)
end Riff A
44
P.M.
Go back to C Chorus (bar 22)
slipped
from
the tip of your tongue
(C'mon)
Yeah
D5
Csus2
G/B
N.C.(G5) (F5)
D5
Csus2
G/B
G5 F5
Gtr. 6 plays Riff A (see bar 42)
Gtr. 3
46
P.M.
P.M.
F
2nd Guitar Solo (Brian May) (2:57)
D5
C5
G/B
D5
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig 3 (see bar 22)
Gtr. 7 (elec. w/dist. and wah pedal)
50
3/4
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 22)
Fill 1 (2:17)
Gtr. 5
Fill 2 (3:25)
Gtr. 7



G **Breakdown** (3:25)



H **3rd Chorus** (3:36)



I **Outro** (4:00)

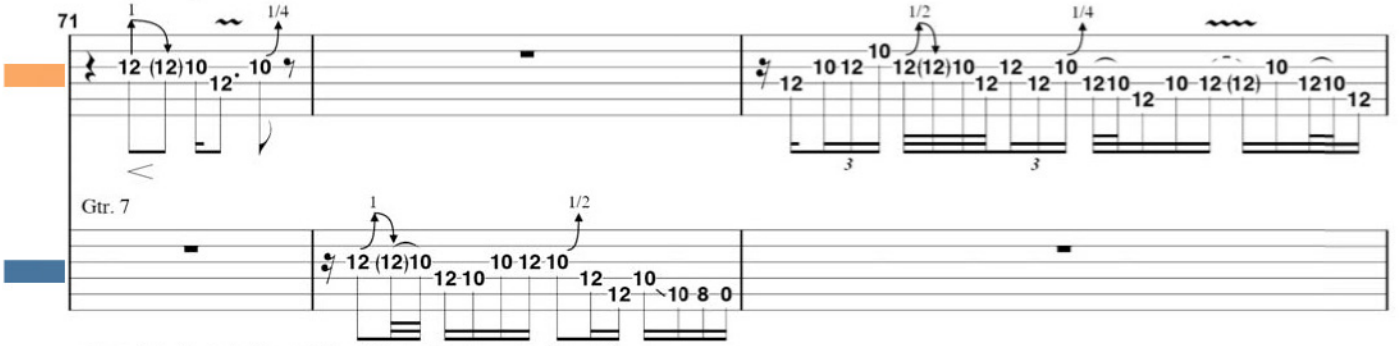
black Yeah blue on black

D5 C5 G/B D5

Gtr. 3 plays first two bars of Rhy. Fig 3 three times (see bar 22)

Gtr. 4 (w/wah)

71

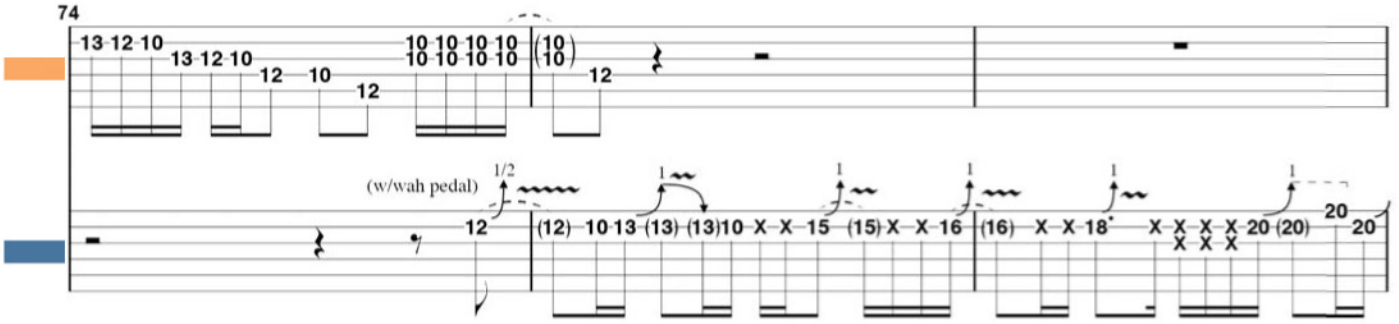


Bass plays first two bars of Bass Fig. 2 three times (see bar 22)

Yeah It's blue on black Yeah It's blue on

C5 G/B D5 C5 G/B

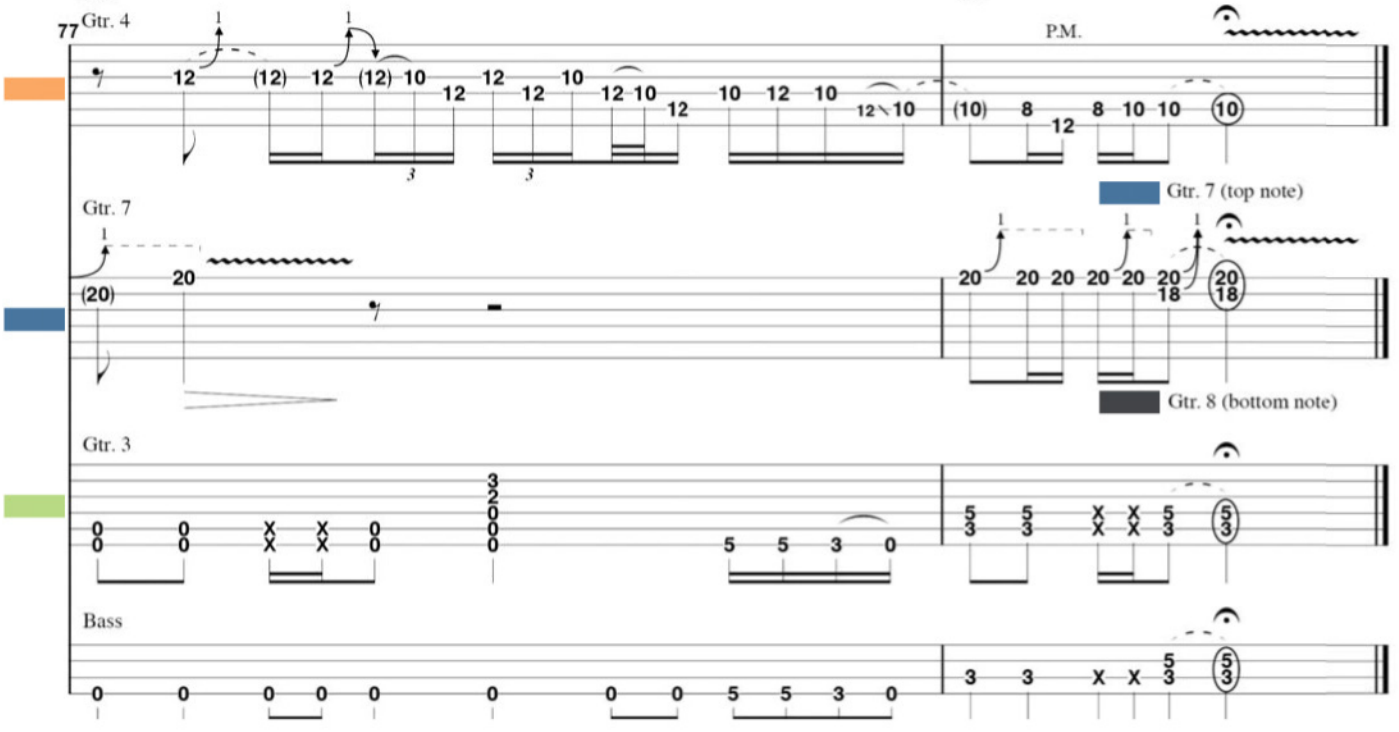
74



black

D5 C5

77 Gtr. 4



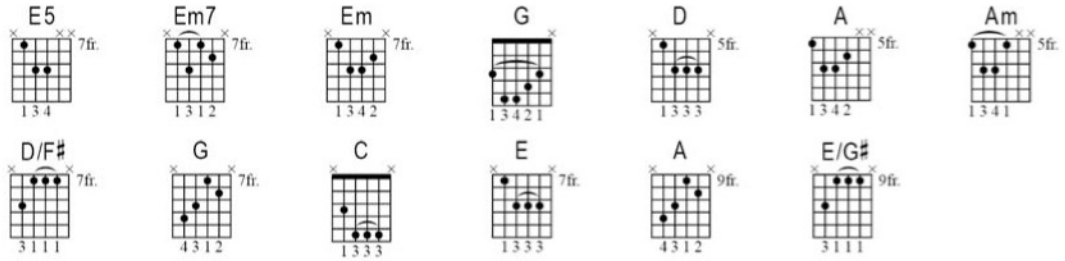
"BLACK SUMMER"

Red Hot Chili Peppers

As heard on **UNLIMITED LOVE**

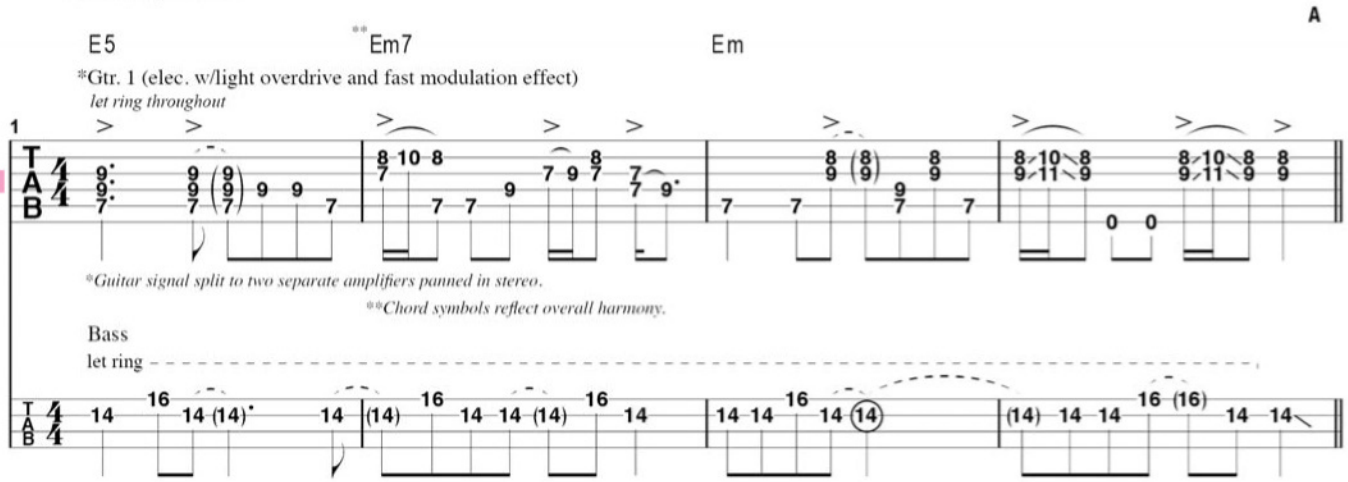
Words and Music by ANTHONY KIEDIS, FLEA, CHAD SMITH *and* JOHN FRUSCIANTE • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high: E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, B♭, E♭).
Bass tuning (low to high): E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭.
All music sounds in the key of E♭minor, one half step lower than written.

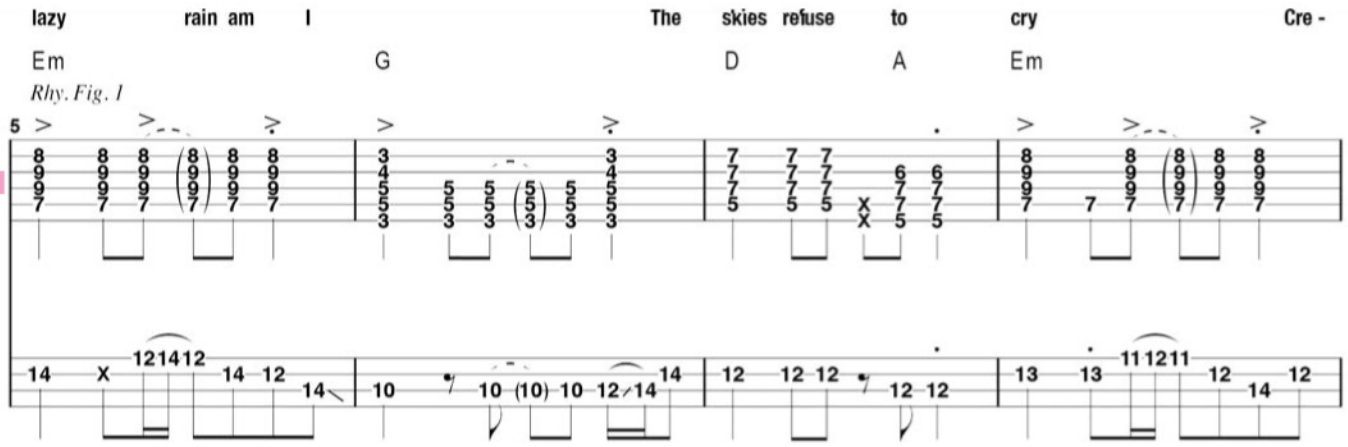


A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 104



B 1st Verse (0:09)



"BLACK SUMMER"
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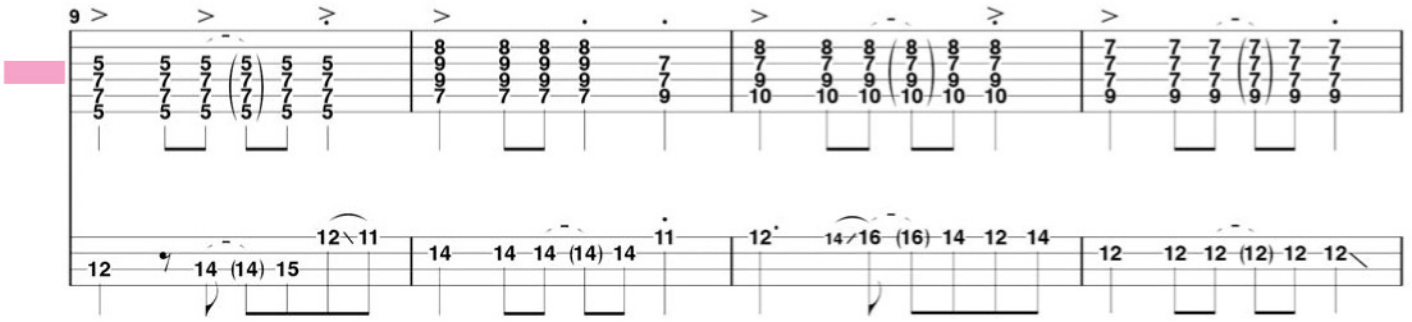
- mation takes it's piece of your supply The

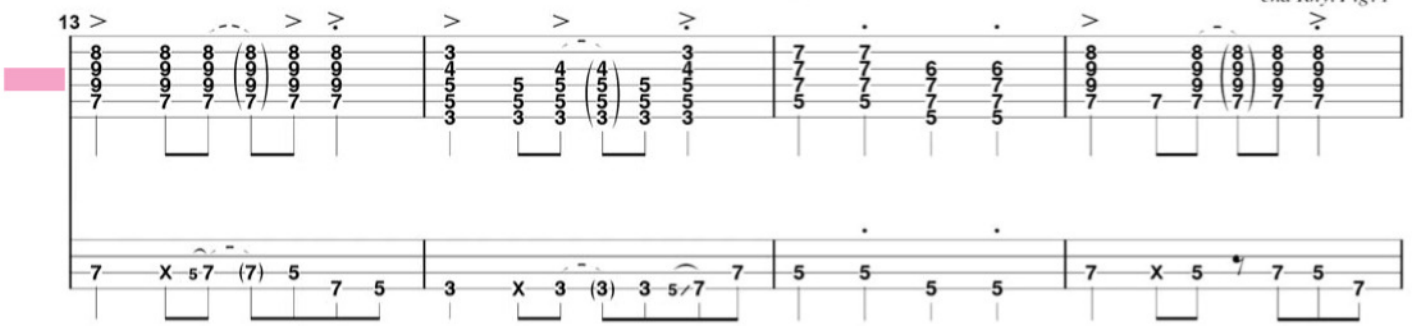
Am Em D/F♯ G D/F♯



night is dressed like noon A sailor spoke too soon And

Em G D A Em

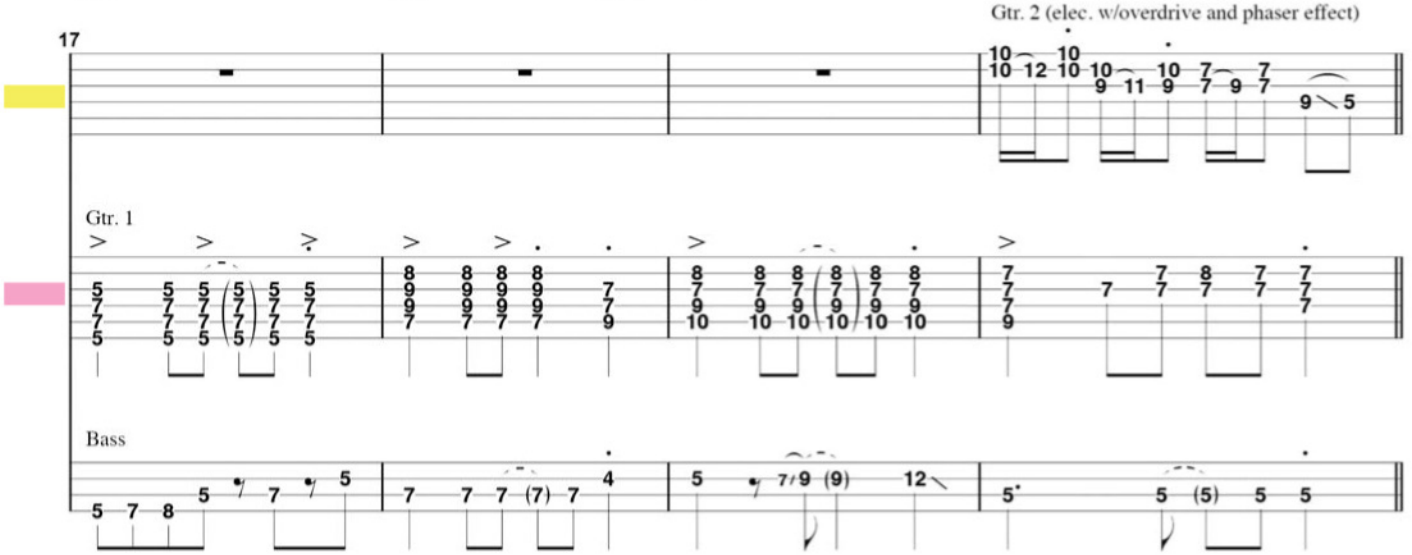
end Rhy. Fig. 1



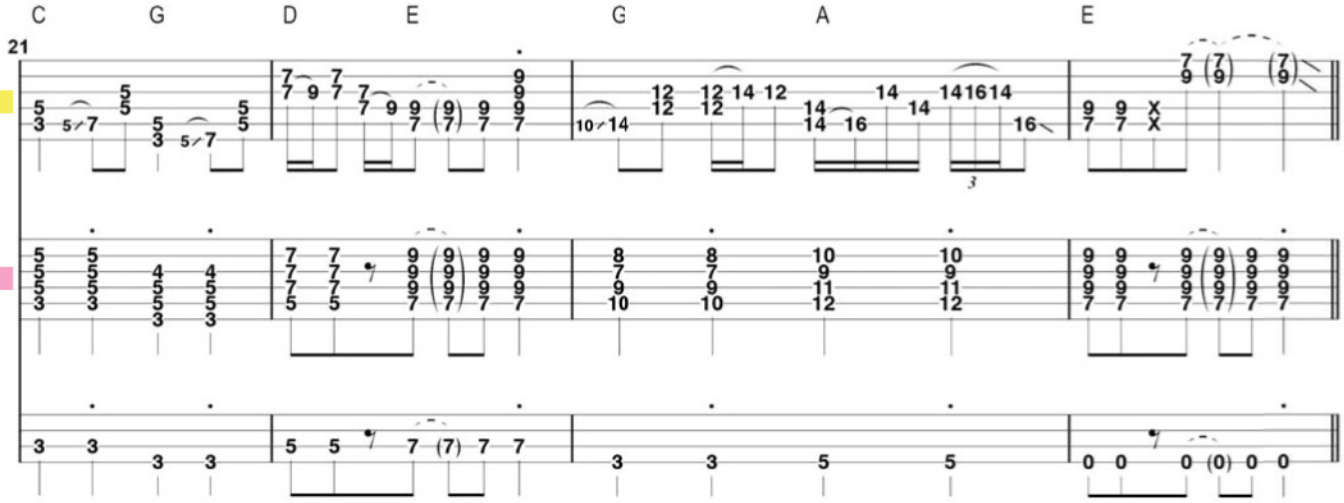
China's on the dark side of the moon (Hit me now)

Am Em D/F♯ G D/F♯

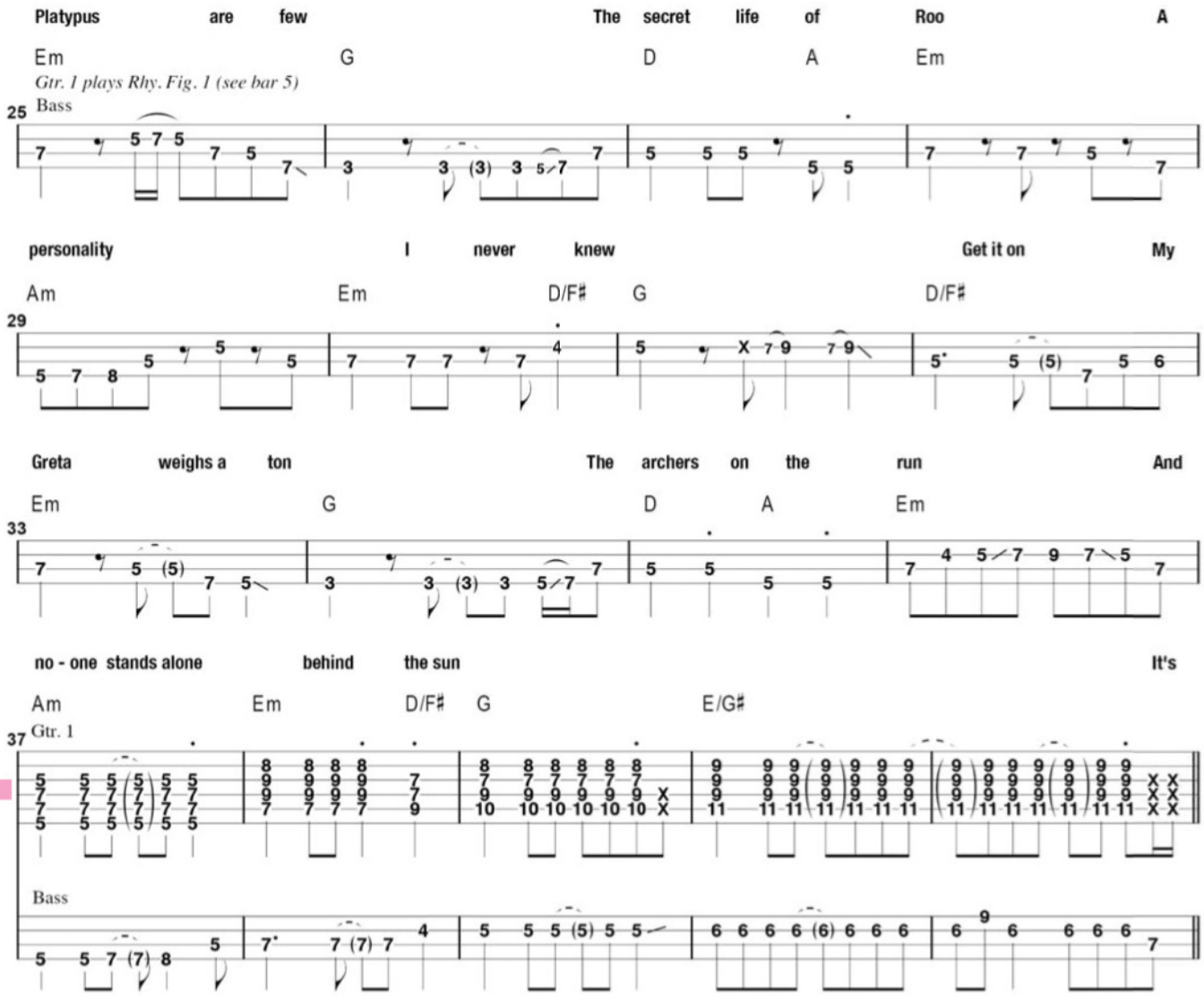
Gtr. 2 (elec. w/overdrive and phaser effect)



C (0:47)



D **2nd Verse** (0:56)



E **Chorus** (1:34, 2:50)

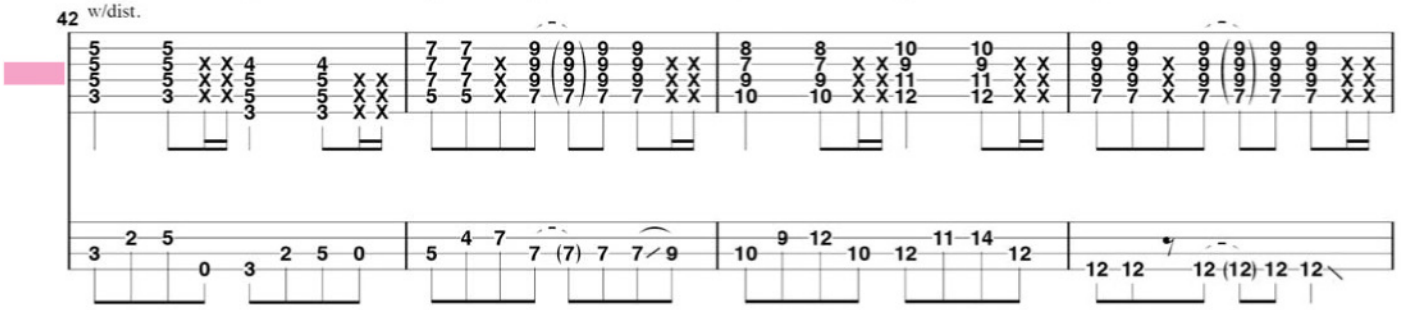
(♩ = 108)

been a long time since I made a new friend Waitin' on another black summer to end It's

(Ah)

C G D E G A E

42 w/dist.



2nd Chorus, skip ahead to **H** *(bar 76)*

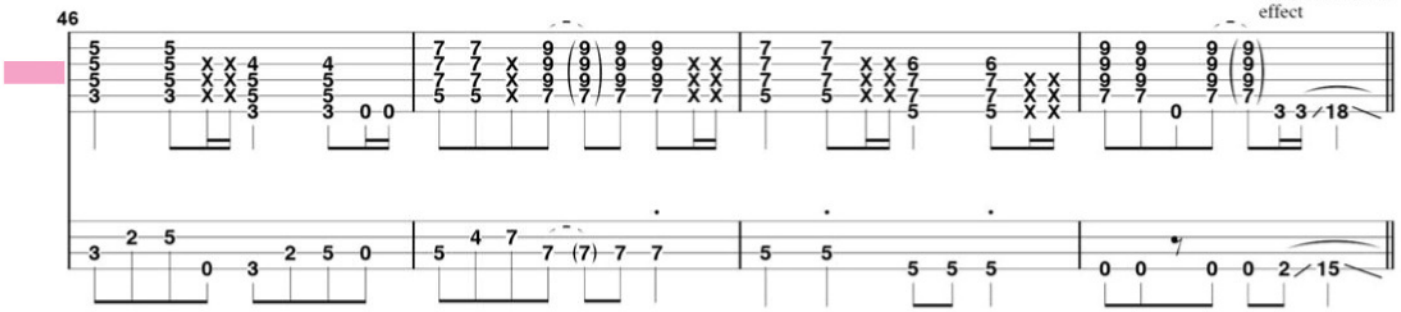
been a long time and you never know when Waitin' on another black summer to end

(Ah)

C G D E D A E

w/fuzz tone and slow modulation effect

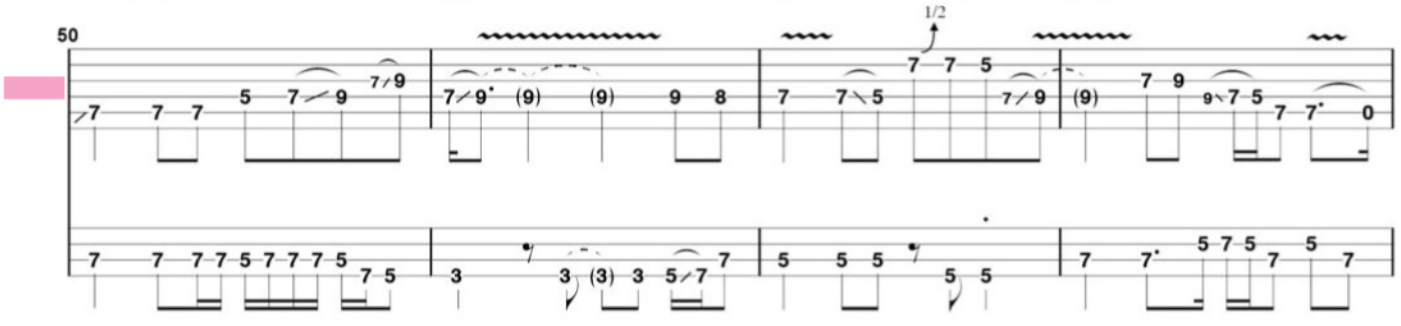
46



F **Guitar Solo** (1:52)

N.C. (Em) (G) (D) (A) (Em)

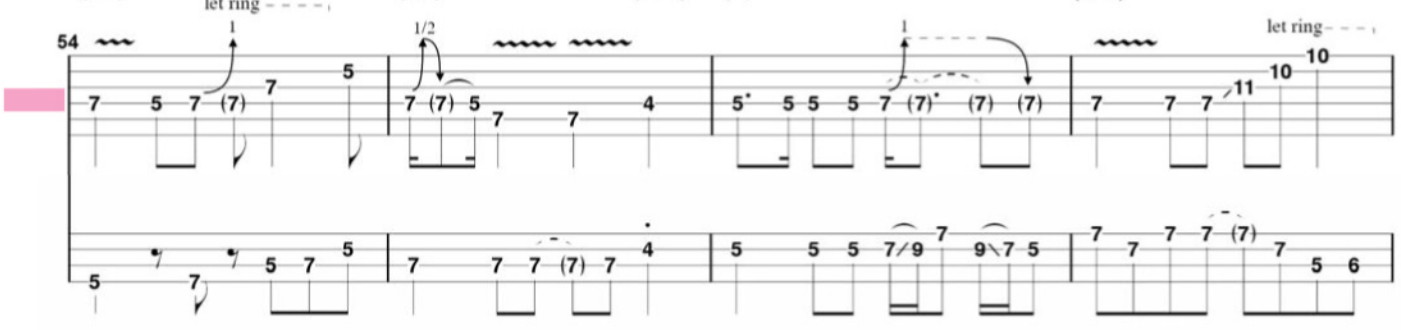
50

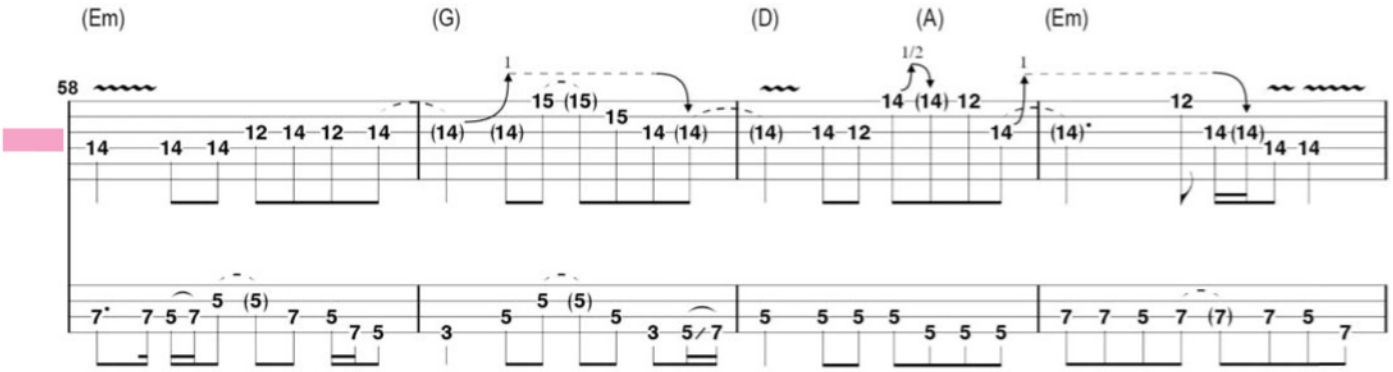


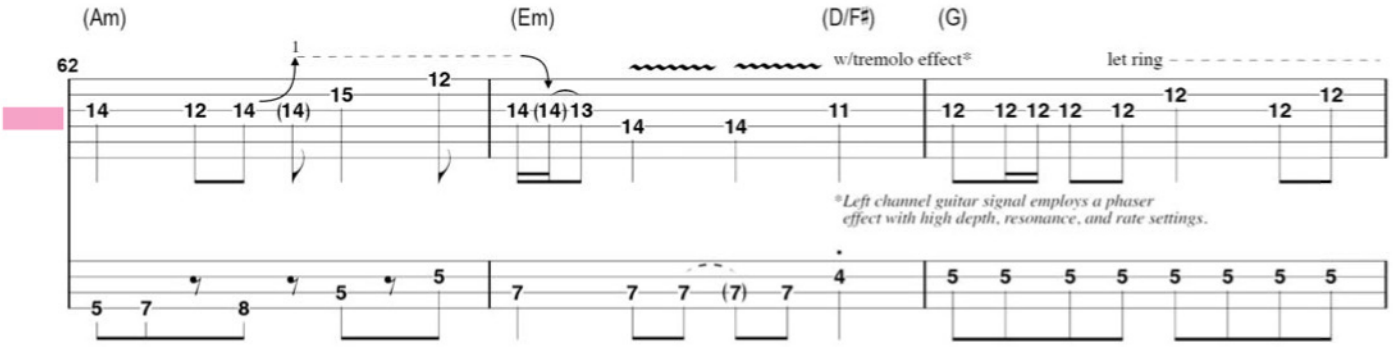
(Am) (Em) (D/F♯) (G) (D/F♯)

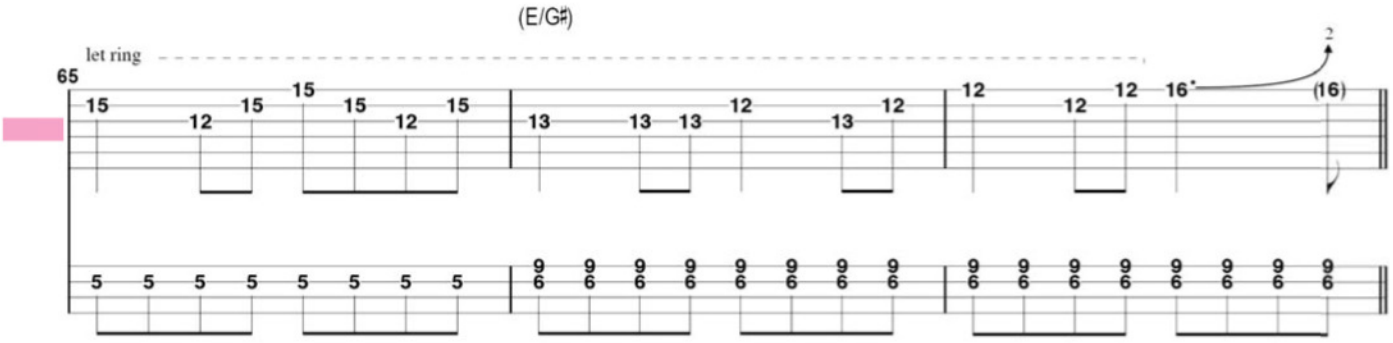
let ring

54









G **Breakdown** (2:32)

(♩ = 104)

Crack the flaming whip A - sailing on a censorship

Em G D A Em

Gtr. 1 (w/light overdrive and tremolo effect)

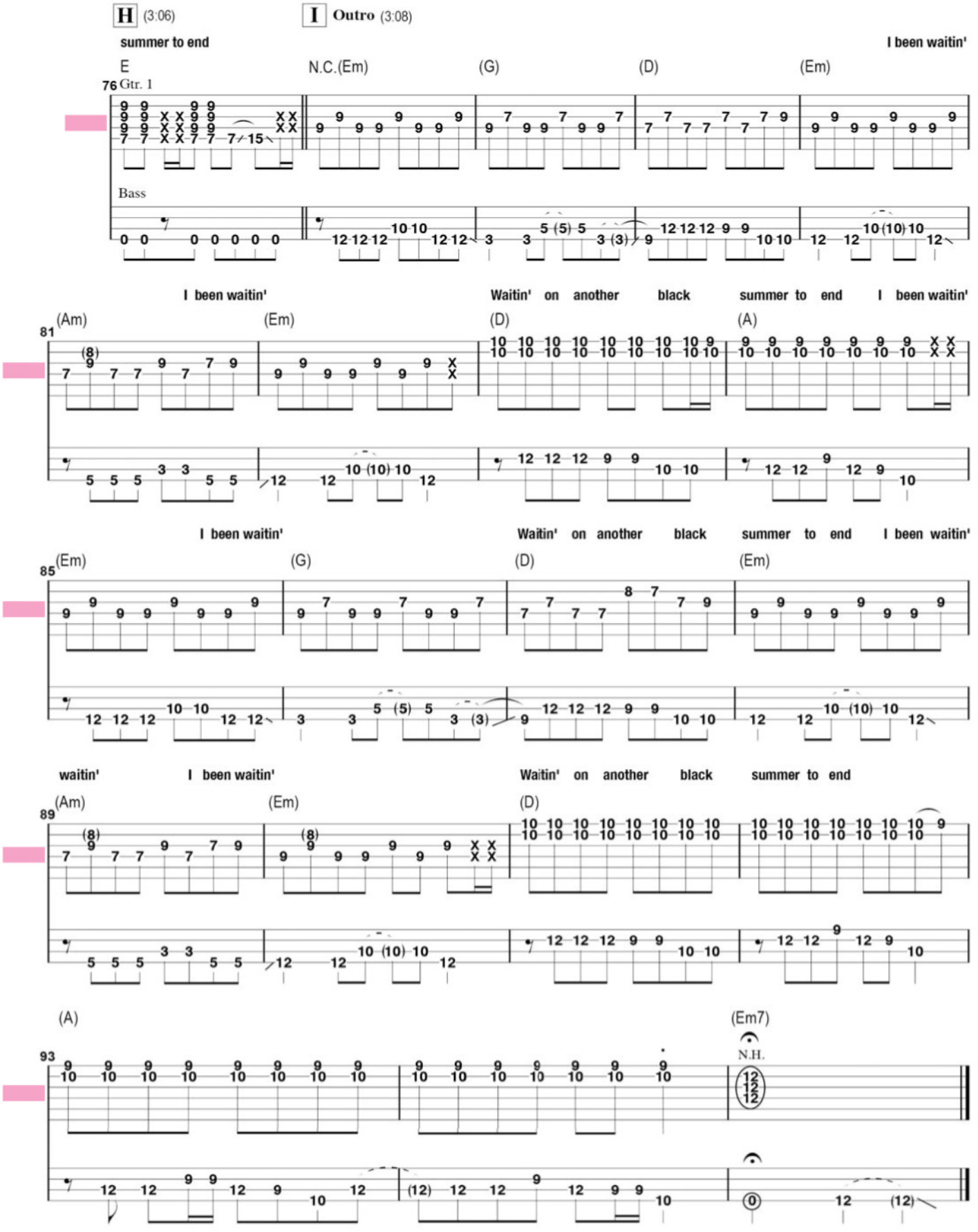
68

Go back to E *Chorus (bar 42)*

Riding on a headless horse to make the trip

Am Em D/F♯ G E/G♯

72


H (3:06)
I Outro (3:08)
summer to end
I been waitin'
E
N.C.(Em)
(G)
(D)
(Em)
76 Gtr. 1
Bass
I been waitin'
Waitin' on another black
summer to end
I been waitin'
(Am)
(Em)
(D)
(A)
81
I been waitin'
Waitin' on another black
summer to end
I been waitin'
(Em)
(G)
(D)
(Em)
85
waitin'
I been waitin'
Waitin' on another black
summer to end
(Am)
(Em)
(D)
89
(A)
(Em7)
N.H.
93

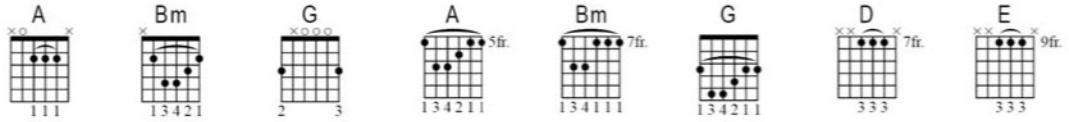
"BADFISH"

Sublime

As heard on **40 OZ. TO FREEDOM**

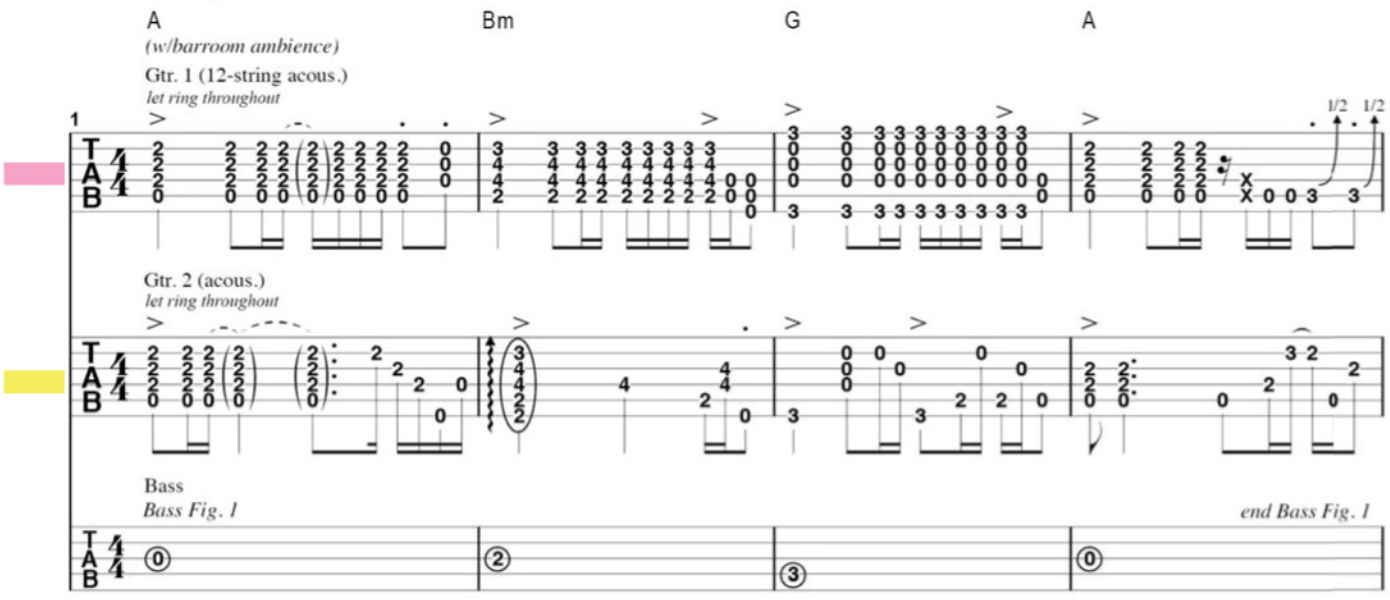
Words and Music by **BRAD NOWELL** • *Transcribed by* **JEFF PERRIN**

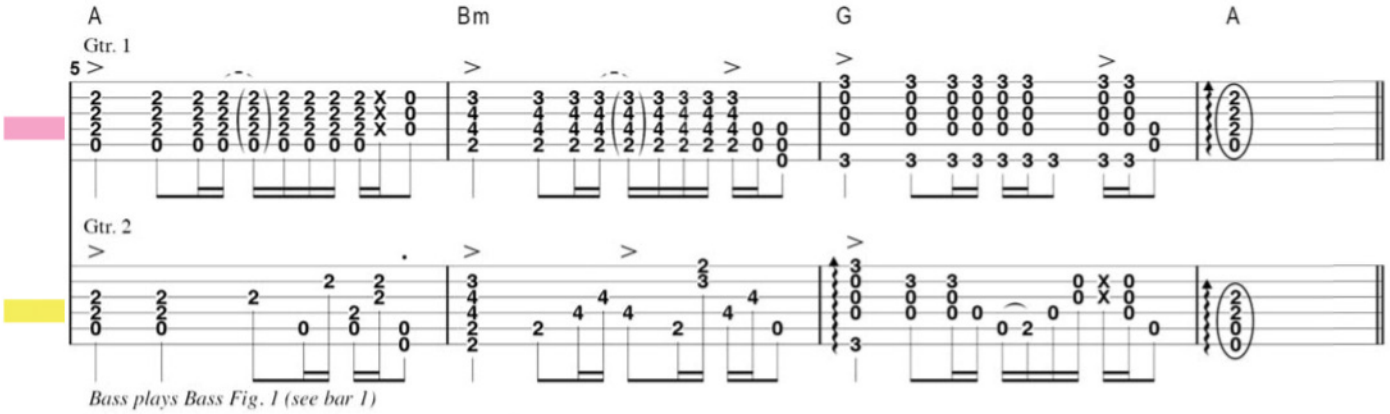
Note: As a result of the tape playback speed being sped up during the mastering process, all pitches on the recording sound slightly sharp (approx. 20 cents). To play along, tune all strings slightly sharp, or set your tuner to reference pitch A=444hz.

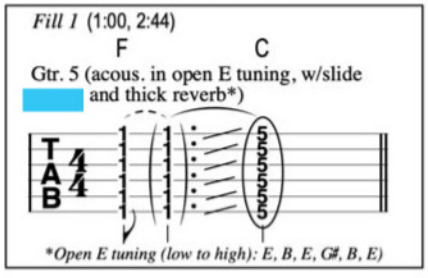


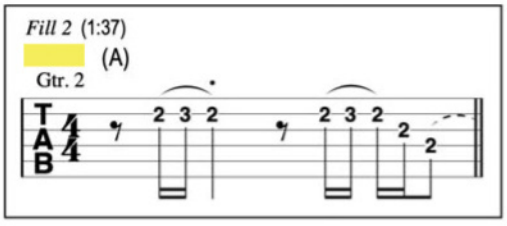
A **Intro** (0:03)

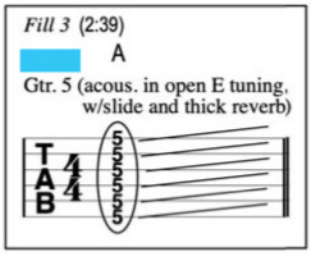
Moderately Slow ♩ = 82











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B **Verses** (0:26, 1:18) (♩ = 92)

1. When you grab ahold of me — You tell me that I'll never be set free
2. Baby you're a big blue whale — Grab the reef when all duck diving fails I

A Bm G A

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/clean tone)
Rhy. Fig. 1

9

Bass
Bass Fig. 2

(play repeats simile)

2nd time, skip ahead to **D** *2nd Chorus (bar 29)*

But I'm a parasite
swim but I wish I never learned — The Creep and crawl I step into the night
water's too polluted with germs I

A Bm G A

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 2, second time (see below bar 6)

end Rhy. Fig. 1

13

end Bass Fig. 2

C **1st Chorus** (0:47) (♩ = 93)

Two pints of booze — Tell me are you a badfish too (Are you a badfish too)

A D G A

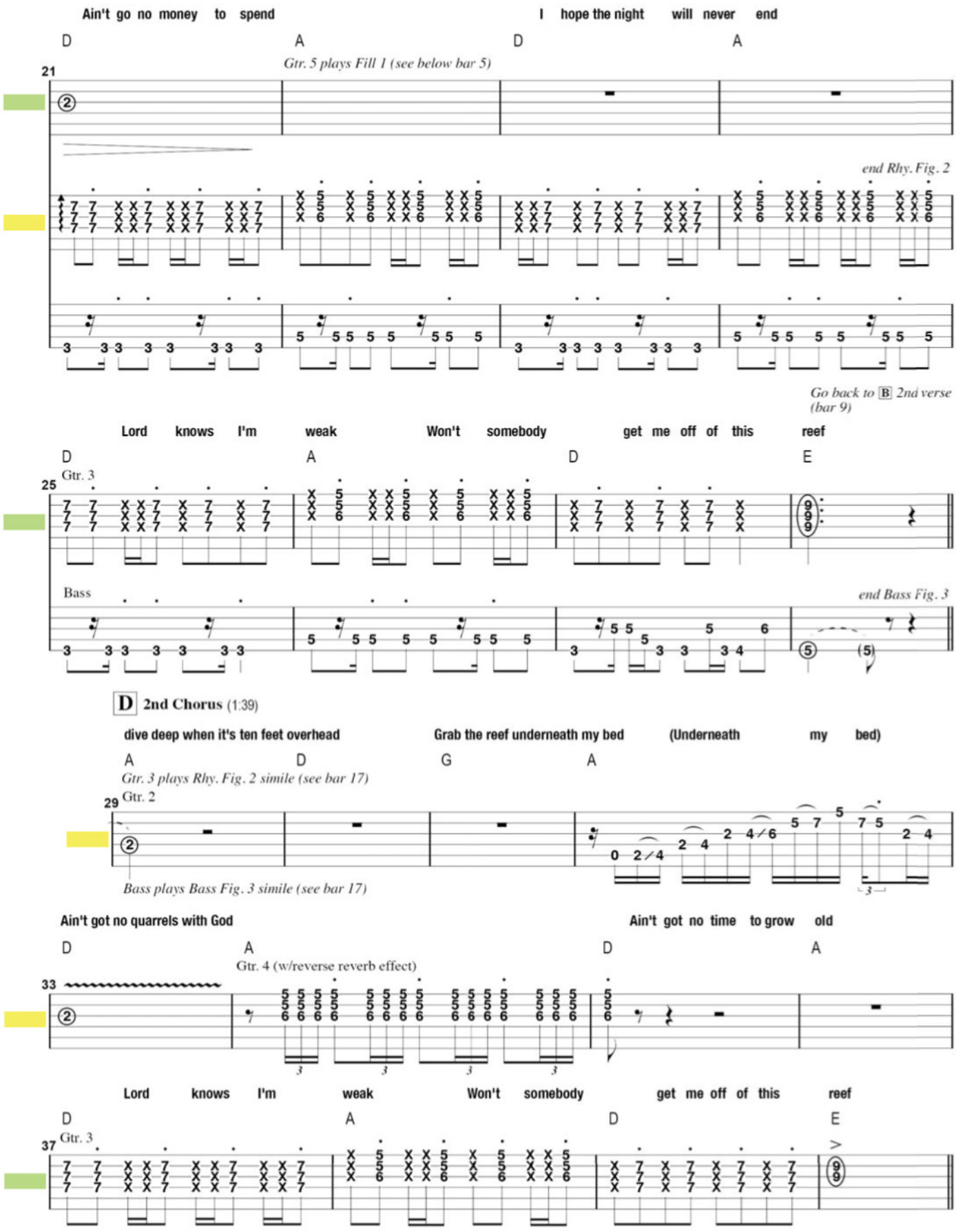
Gtr. 3
Rhy. Fig. 2

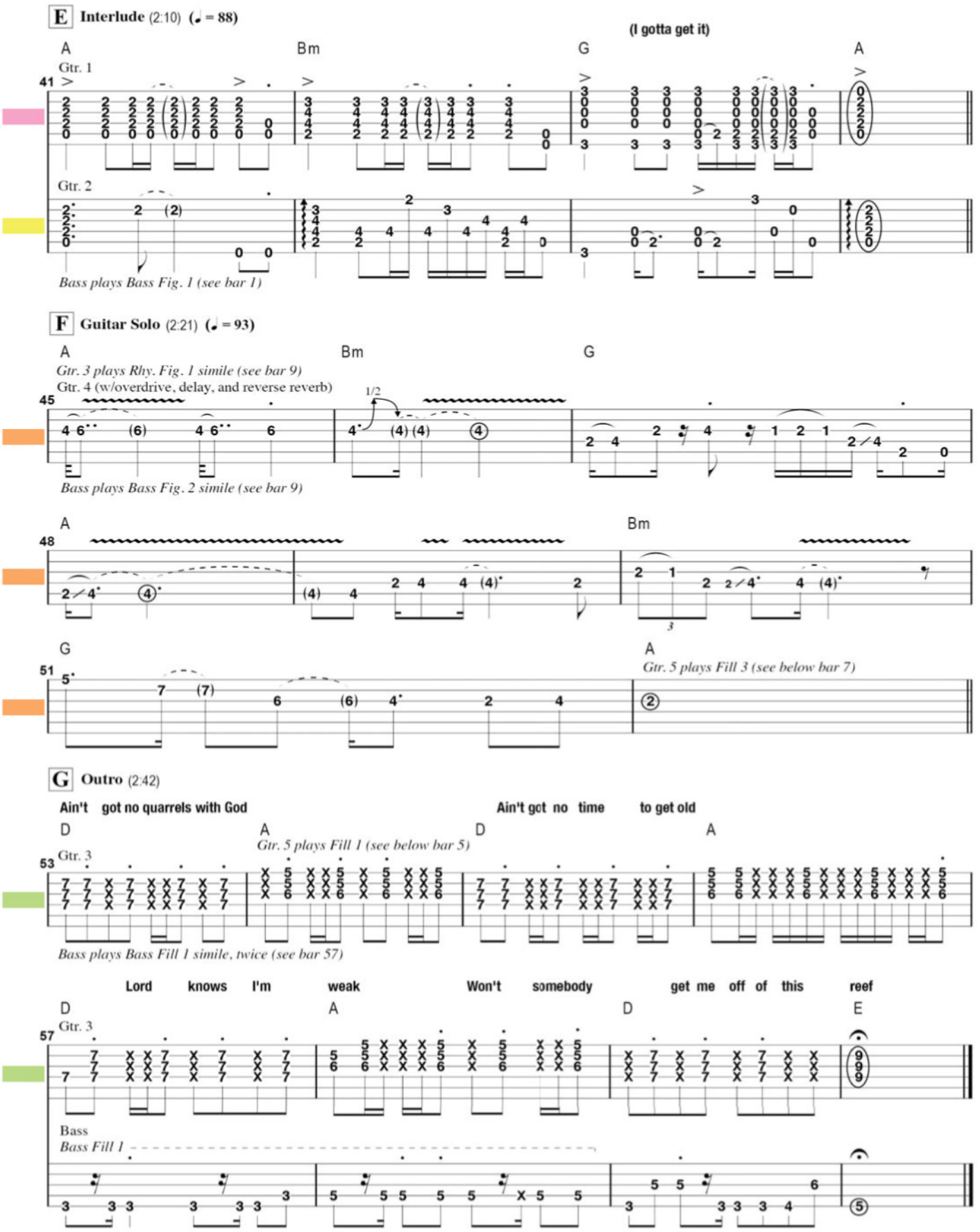
17

Gtr. 4 (elec. w/clean tone and thick reverb)

Gtr. 2 (acous.)

Bass
Bass Fig. 3


Ain't go no money to spend
I hope the night will never end
D
A
D
A
21
Gtr. 5 plays Fill 1 (see below bar 5)
end Rhy. Fig. 2
Go back to B 2nd verse (bar 9)
Lord knows I'm weak
Won't somebody get me off of this reef
D
A
D
E
25
Gtr. 3
Bass
end Bass Fig. 3
D 2nd Chorus (1:39)
dive deep when it's ten feet overhead
Grab the reef underneath my bed
(Underneath my bed)
A
D
G
A
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see bar 17)
29
Gtr. 2
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 simile (see bar 17)
Ain't got no quarrels with God
Ain't got no time to grow old
D
A
D
A
Gtr. 4 (w/reverse reverb effect)
33
Lord knows I'm weak
Won't somebody get me off of this reef
D
A
D
E
37
Gtr. 3


E Interlude (2:10) (♩ = 88)
(I gotta get it)
A
Bm
G
A
Gtr. 1
41
Gtr. 2
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)
F Guitar Solo (2:21) (♩ = 93)
A
Bm
G
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see bar 9)
Gtr. 4 (w/overdrive, delay, and reverse reverb)
45
1/2
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 9)
A
Bm
48
G
A
51
Gtr. 5 plays Fill 3 (see below bar 7)
G Outro (2:42)
Ain't got no quarrels with God
Ain't got no time to get old
D
A
D
A
Gtr. 5 plays Fill 1 (see below bar 5)
Gtr. 3
53
Bass plays Bass Fill 1 simile, twice (see bar 57)
Lord knows I'm weak
Won't somebody get me off of this reef
D
A
D
E
Gtr. 3
57
Bass
Bass Fill 1

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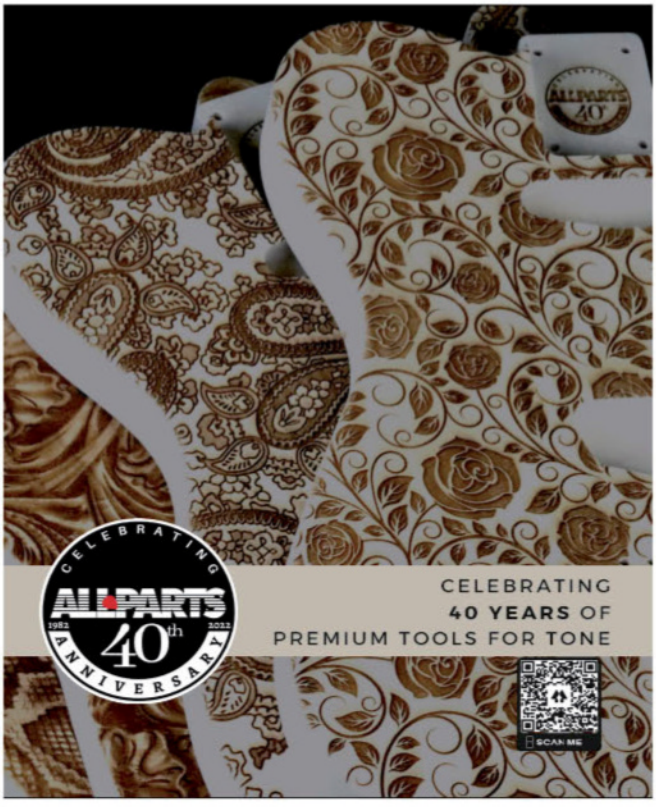

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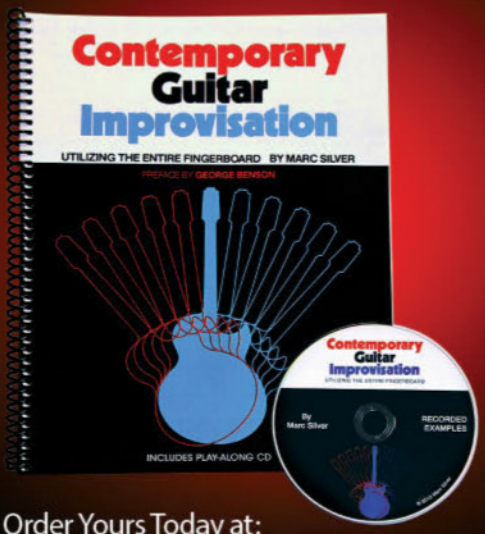

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BY CHRIS GILL

1981-PRESENT BOSS SD-1 SUPER OVERDRIVE

CATEGORY: OVERDRIVE PEDAL

Zakk Wylde [*left*] in Florida in 2016; Josh Homme in California in 2014

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

JOSH HOMME "Treble Booster"

Level: 10, Tone: 10, Drive: 0

Tip: *Josh has used the SD-1 with a vintage Ampeg amp with a distinctive midrange peak along with a Boss GE-7 graphic EQ to further boost 400Hz. This SD-1 setting adds sizzle and clarity to his thick-as-molasses midrange.*

ZAKK WYLDE Solo

Level: 6.5, Tone: 5, Drive: 6.5

Tip: *Active humbuckers like EMGs and a Marshall JCM800 with the gain cranked deliver aggressive, explosive lead tones with excellent clarity and singing sustain.*

BOSS INTRODUCED THE SD-1 Super Overdrive pedal way back in 1981. Since then, the SD-1 has remained in continuous production, selling literally millions of units and consistently enjoying status as a top-selling pedal for several decades, not just within Boss sales but in general overall pedal sales as well. The reasons for its success are pretty simple: it's inexpensive (brand-new ones sell for less than $70); it's incredibly sturdy and reliable; and it just sounds good. Thanks to the SD-1's long history and incredible success, there's a very good chance that most guitarists reading this article already own or have owned one.

Boss developed the SD-1 as an improved version of the OD-1 Overdrive by adding a tone control and making a few tweaks to the circuit. Tone snobs can wax poetic about how certain component changes over the years have affected its tone, but the truth is a new SD-1 doesn't sound dramatically different from an original early Eighties model, and many players may actually prefer the nuances of newer units. The key to the distinctive overdrive tones of these Boss overdrive circuits is asymmetrical clipping, which is the result of when a signal's waveform has positive and negative amplitude peaks that are clipped unevenly, in the SD-1's case using a different number of diodes to clip the positive and negative peaks respectively. The end result is similar to the overdrive produced by a tube amp's push/pull circuit as no two tubes are really ever matched 100 percent.

Asymmetrical clipping produces both even and odd harmonics, resulting in harmonically rich distortion that sounds layered. The SD-1's biggest competitor, the Ibanez Tube Screamer, uses symmetrical clipping, which produces only odd harmonics and sounds warmer, more focused and compressed. One isn't necessarily better than the other, and both have their individual advantages, but ironically the overdrive characteristics of an SD-1 are closer to an actual tube amp than those of a Tube Screamer (although there's more to tube amp overdrive than asymmetrical clipping).

Science and technology aside, the SD-1 just sounds pretty damn good paired with a wide variety of amps, including various Marshalls (an SD-1 and JCM800 is a famous combo), Fenders, Voxes and even the latest boutique models. The pedal's list of users is huge, but it is probably best known for its impact on hard rock and metal guitar during the Eighties, with notable examples including Ozzy's post-Randy Rhoads players Zakk Wylde and Jake E. Lee, Kirk Hammett during Metallica's *Kill 'Em All* days, Steve Vai, Jason Becker, Warren DeMartini, Reb Beach, Richie Sambora and even Prince. The Edge has had an SD-1 on his ever-growing pedalboard since 1981, and it is a favorite of adventurous players like John Frusciante, Jonny Greenwood, Josh Homme, Robert Smith and Jack White to the more refined sounds of Lindsey Buckingham, Tommy Emmanuel, Mark Knopfler and Lee Ritenour. Billy Duffy and John Petrucci are new converts who use the more upscale Boss Waza Craft SD-1w.

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